Hafa Adai!

After year in morgue, US Marine vet is finally laid to rest. PAGE 2

Christmas in the Marianas parade, Army band on Dec. 17. PAGE 3

$1

Saipan Tribune

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THURSDAY DECEMBER 15, 2022
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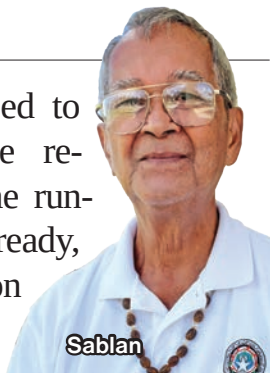
CHRISTMAS IN THE MARIANAS MVA
Mt. Carmel School students perform at the 18th Annual Christmas in the Marianas last Dec. 10, 2022, at the Garapan Fishing Base on Saipan. The event continues on Dec. 17, 2022, with a Christmas Parade throughout downtown Garapan and the Guam Army National Guard 721st Rock Band performing.

CEC Sablan fears lack of quorum to certify runoff election results

» CEC board meeting to certify runoff election results moved to Friday

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER


Sablan

With the need to certify the results of the runoff race already, Commonwealth Election Commission chair Jesus I. Sablan said it is even more urgent now to confirm Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' appointment of former special assistant for Women's Affairs Remedio Reyes Sablan to serve as CEC commissioner.

See CEC on **Page 4**

Ex-DCCA chief sued for alleged illegal OT

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI Attorney General Edward Manibusan has filed a lawsuit in Superior Court against former Department of Community and Cultural Affairs secretary Robert Hunter for the alleged excessive overtime compensation he received from Super Typhoon Yutu recovery.

Hunter

Manibusan, through OAG Chief Solicitor Robert Glass Jr., filed the lawsuit yesterday, accusing Hunter of receiving over $17,000 in illegal overtime compensation following the onslaught of Super Typhoon Yutu

According to the 15-page

See SUED on **Page 4**

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
2021 Miss Marianas Savannah Lyn Delos Santos.

Savannah makes history at beauty pageant

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

2021 Miss Marianas Savannah Lyn Delos Santos has made history as, for the first time ever in an international pageant, the CNMI placed in the Top 15 of the 60th Miss International Beauty Pageant 2022 held at the Tokyo Dome City Hall in Tokyo, Japan, last Dec. 13, 2022.

The 25-year-old Sexual Assault Response team manager at the Northern Marianas Coalition Against

See PAGEANT on **Page 4**

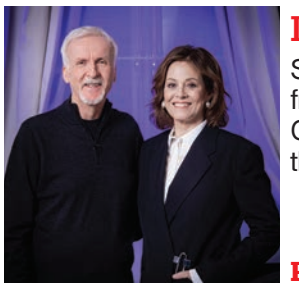
INSIDE

LOCAL
The Department of Public Safety offers a safe ride home for all those drinking out this holiday season.

PAGE 15

BUSINESS
For fans of anime or K-pop, Fun Max is stocked in time for the holiday shopping season.

PAGE 16



LIFE & STYLE
Sigourney Weaver's friendship with James Cameron came after the 1986 film "Aliens."

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Local

After year in morgue, US Marine vet is finally laid to rest

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
Chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of the CNMI Office of Veterans Affairs and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., the unclaimed remains of a U.S. Marine veteran was finally laid to rest last Monday at the Veterans Cemetery in Marpi.

According to OVA executive director Marie Igitol-Salas, the U.S. Marine Corp veteran, Private First Class Daniel Martinez, passed away last year in December and, although efforts were made to find his next of kin, all efforts were exhausted. The late Martinez was a former United States resident before coming to the CNMI; and as he was not originally from here, the attempt at trying to locate his family was pretty slim and turned out to be unsuccessful. Salas said that ever since the last attempt was made, there was no recorded follow through between CHCC and OVA about the body.

Until she assumed her new role at OVA in October this year, Salas said she wasn't aware of the unclaimed remains at the hospital's morgue, and it wasn't until she started her term that she found out about Martinez. "…When I found that out, I thought that was very unacceptable, to keep a veteran in the morgue for a year."

She said that, after speaking with Thomas Palacios of CHCC, they decided to both take the preliminary protocols and make another effort to locate any living kin of the late veteran and also sent out a notice to the public. Palacios and Salas also tapped the help of the American Red Cross, but after more dead ends, and still no one claiming Martinez, Salas and OVA took on the responsibility to see that the veteran's remains be laid to rest. Salas described this as one of her greatest accomplishments upon becoming OVA's executive director, yet she also highly credited her team. "I'm very honored, and very proud to have finally give him a proper burial." She also credited the OVA staff for all their help in the process, including the long hours of research in attempt to find Martinez's next of kin.

On Monday, three Marine officers arrived from Guam to be present for the burial, and helped escort the casket, and honored the late veteran in a military fashion before laying the body to rest at the Veterans Cemetery. And although the veteran may not have had any family claim his body, several of Martinez's close friends in the CNMI gathered for the burial. Salas described the moment, a beautiful one.

U.S. Marine Corps veteran PFC Daniel Martinez is given a proper military burial Monday at the Veteran's Cemetery in Marpi.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CCAC celebrates CNMI languages with free concert

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

To celebrate the islands' languages and in an attempt to bring back a beloved musical program that has faded over time, the Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts are holding the Kantan Isla Kkéélúl Falúu Concert at the Civic center in Susupe tonight from 6pm to 10pm.

The concert will be highlighting the Carolinian and Chamorro languages through music, with an assembly of performers presenting their songs using the CNMI's indigenous language, Chamorro and Carolinian.

The Kantan Isla Kkéélúl Falúu, (translated as 'Island Song') Concert is free of charge and open to all ages, welcoming families and community members to join the event at the venue's grounds, directly across the West Coast restaurant, and the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center.

CCAC's Sepe Gloriana Teuira said that the event is, in a way, a "revival" of the Kantan Isla, which had been a former regular program that died out over the years. Teuira said the main goal of the concert is basically "promoting language through music." She added that all performing artists would be singing in either Chamorro or Carolinian languages and are encouraged to add a Christmas flair to their performance in the spirit of the holidays.

"Hopefully it'll be an annual event," she added.

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OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BID
CUC-IFB-23-012

Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites) in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The intent of the contract is for the Contractor to provide all labor, equipment, supplies, and materials necessary for the removal and installation of GAC and Gravel media replacement, disposal of spent GAC and Gravel media, possible sample collection, transportation, and the possible supply of gravel media, analyses of spent media, and additional waste containers/drums for disposal, if necessary. CUC requires the Project to be completed in 180 calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **$200.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **December 28, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-IFB-23-012, Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites)"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 17, 2023,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the Unites States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. A Payment Bond of One Hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on January 4, 2023** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and to Christie Sablan, P&S, Senior Administrative Technician – christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW23-ITB NO.: 42200016

SUBMISSION DATE: December 22, 2022 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Renovation of the Secretary of Finance Office Building Number 1302, Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **December 14, 2022** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **January 03, 2023**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **January 10, 2023** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ DAVID DLG. ATALIG
SECRETARY OF FINANCE

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
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Christmas in the Marianas parade, Army band on Dec. 17

An illuminated Christmas parade and a special performance by the Guam Army National Guard 721st Rock Band will highlight this Saturday's 18th Annual Christmas in Tt

The Christmas Parade will kick off at 6pm right after sunset at American Memorial Park and travel south along Beach Road of the Christmas in the Marianas grounds at Garapan Fishing Base. The parade will feature decorated floats and cars, costumed walking groups, and ol' Saint Nick, himself.

"It's going to be an exciting night this Saturday at Christmas in the Marianas, especially with our nighttime Christmas Parade and a two-hour performance by our off-island guest military band," said MVA acting managing director Judy C. Torres. "It's been so wonderful to gather and celebrate the holidays together again, and we invite everyone to stop by and catch the Christmas spirit!"

This Saturday's onstage lineup includes the Guam Army National Guard 721st Rock Band (5pm), Christmas Costume Catwalk (7pm), and the awards ceremony for competitions (8pm). Awards will be given for costumes, caroling, skits, decorated Christmas trees using natural and recycled material, the Mini Christmas Village, and the Christmas Parade.

Christmas in the Marianas will be held from 5pm to 9pm on Saturday, with the final night on Jan. 7, 2022. The event is organized by in cooperation with the CNMI Public School System, private schools, PDM Promoters, and Pacific Development Inc.

For more information, contact MVA Community Projects specialist Jack Aranda at jaranda@mymarianas.com or 664-3200/1 or visit www.mymarianas.com. ***(MVA)***

High surf advisory and rip currents seen until Sunday

A high surf advisory is in effect from 6am today, Thursday, to 6pm Sunday for north facing reefs on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

There is also a high risk of rip currents from this morning through Sunday afternoon for north and east facing reefs.

A small craft advisory is in effect from 6am today, Thursday to 6pm Sunday. This means that wind speeds of 21 to 33 knots are expected to produce wave conditions hazardous to small craft.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, for the high surf advisory, large breaking waves of 7 to 10 feet are expected in north facing reefs of the Marianas. For the high rip current risk, dangerous rip currents are expected in the north and east facing reefs of the Marianas.

The high surf advisory is from 6am Thursday to 6pm Sunday. For the high rip current risk, it will last from

See HIGH on Next Page

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STK	MODEL	WAS	NOW!
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18R279	2018 KIA FORTE S	$17,638	$14,995
21H047A	2018 HYUNDAI KONA SPORT	$22,258	$15,995
21D129A	2018 HYUNDAI KONA SPORT	$20,789	$15,995
17P341	2017 MAZDA 6 SPORT	$18,355	$16,995
16P375	2016 MAZDA CX5 TOURING	$23,499	$16,995
21H079A	2020 HYUNDAI ELANTRA SE	$21,064	$16,995
18P405	2018 HYUNDAI ELANTRA SE	$19,004	$16,995
18HS947	2018 HONDA CIVIC EX-T	$23,458	$16,995
~~16P378~~	~~2016 TOYOTA COROLLA SE~~ SOLD	~~$20,383~~	~~$17,995~~
18P393	2018 NISSAN ROGUE SV	$22,661	$17,995
20R292	2020 HYUNDAI ELANTRA SPORT	$24,247	$18,995
22M075A	2015 HYUNDAI GENESIS G80 LIMITED	$24,374	$18,995
21H077A	2013 TOYOTA 4 RUNNER SR5	$23,355	$18,995
18P398	2018 MAZDA CX5 TOURING	$23,263	$19,995
22H186A	2020 HYUNDAI VELOSTER ULT COUPE	$29,120	$19,995
8H054E	2019 HYUNDAI KONA SPORT	$21,651	$19,995

STK	MODEL	WAS	NOW!
17HS1036	2017 FORD MUSTANG CONV	$23,525	$19,995
17HS850	2017 FORD TRANSIT XLT LOW ROOF	$42,381	$19,995
18P397	2018 MAZDA CX5 SPORT	$25,765	$20,995
21D106A	2017 TOYOTA RAV4 SPORT	$23,760	$21,995
18P416	2018 TOYOTA RAV4 LE	$31,648	$22,995
22M032A	2018 HONDA CIVIC EX	$25,840	$22,995
20P476	2020 MAZDA 3 HB PREMIUM	$33,050	$24,995
22M021A	2019 MAZDA 6	$30,118	$24,995
18P345A	2018 HYUNDAI TUCSON LIMITED	$30,451	$24,995
22M050A	2018 TOYOTA CAMRY XLE	$27,271	$24,995
16P387	2016 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER LE	$27,808	$24,995
13P359	2013 TOYOTA FJ CRUISER	$33,890	$27,995
18P344	2018 TOYOTA TACOMA SR5	$34,836	$31,995
20H141E	2018 HYUNDAI GENESIS G90	$24,374	$34,995
18P411	2018 TOYOTA 4 RUNNER	$41,254	$36,995
~~19P367~~	~~2019 HONDA RIDGELINE~~ SOLD	~~$47,459~~	~~$38,995~~

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Man in Paseo stabbing sentenced to 10 years

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man who was arrested earlier this year for stabbing two others at Paseo de Marianas in Garapan has pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter and has been sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

Huang Rui Jun, 49, has pleaded guilty to one count of voluntary manslaughter, and one count of aggravated assault and battery before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho for stabbing two others back in May at the Paseo de Marianas.

Camacho, for his part, sentenced Huang to an imprisonment term of 10 years for the voluntary manslaughter charge, and one year for the aggravated assault charge, to be served concurrent with his sentence for manslaughter.

However, pursuant to his plea agreement, Huang will only be serving three years and six months of his 10-year sentence. The remaining six years and six months of Huang's sentence were suspended.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

CWA to hold Women's Entrepreneurs Family Bonanza

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

To support the islands' female entrepreneurs, the CNMI Women's Association will be hosting the Women's Entrepreneurs Family Bonanza this Friday, from 10:30am to 7pm, at the Women's Center on Capital Hill.

CWA is inviting all members of the community to drop by and stock up on Christmas presents and stocking fillers, while also benefitting CNMI women entrepreneurs that will be vendors at the event.

The bonanza will not only have entertainment, but will also display a variety of goods, from cutlery to custom-made gifts, clothing, jewelry and sweets. The event will be held in support of women entrepreneurs in the CNMI, and will feature businesses such as Boka Marianas, Seasoned with Hafa Adai, Neni Girls Nail, Island Dry 670, Maipe Pachotmu, Crafty Baker, Candle J Saipan, Mind2Muscle, Local Girls Lemonade, Chagi Norf Kitchen, Tahine Creations, Spn.dylus 670, Lash Expressions by Sherijean, and many more, including pet services such as Boonie Babies and Come Play with Us.

CWA invites the community to check out this event.

For more information, contact (670) 233-8978 or reach out on Facebook at cnmiwomen.

CEC

From Page 1

Jesus I. Sablan underscored yesterday the need to immediately confirm Remedio Reyes Sablan in order to avoid further delays in certifying the tabulation results of the gubernatorial runoff race.

At the confirmation hearing for the 71-year-old Remedio Sablan before the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations, Jesus Sablan urged the committee to confirm the appointee if not that day, then before today, Thursday.

The chairman disclosed that they tried to call a board meeting for today, Thursday, to certify the provisional ballots, but unfortunately they would not have a quorum. He said they reset the board meeting for tomorrow, Friday, but he is still worried that they won't be able to have a quorum come Friday.

Jesus Sablan said one commissioner has a meeting Friday so they are trying to have that meeting rescheduled so that the commissioner can attend the CEC meeting and they can proceed with the certification of the runoff election results.

He said he has nothing to say about the appointee as the record presented before the committee is very clear that she is an intelligent person.

"And I know for a fact that she would do a good job, along with the rest of the board members," the chairman said.

The CEC board needs five commissioners to obtain a quorum.

In the absence of quorum, what would happen to the runoff election results for certification, asked Sen. Victor B. Hocog (R-Rota).

Jesus Sablan said there are seven commissioners at present, including himself, but one member is currently in the Philippines for medical purposes, and another member is in Guam because of a death in the family.

This leaves the CEC with five commissioners, but one commissioner has a meeting today, Thursday, and Friday.

The chairman said they want to see if that commissioner's meeting can be rescheduled so the CEC board can proceed with the certification of the runoff race results tomorrow, Friday.

Jesus Sablan said he initially put an announcement for a CEC board meeting for today, Thursday, but he rescheduled that for tomorrow, Friday, at 1pm.

"I'm hoping that we would have a quorum," he said.

The chairman said it would resolve matters if they could get Remedio Sablan, so they will surely have a quorum.

"If that does not happen, we'll just have to reschedule for another day where we can have a quorum," Jesus Sablan said.

Last Monday, former representative Juan S. Reyes, who is the overall chairman of the transition and inauguration committees, stated that the CEC board's non-certification of the runoff election results has been hampering their movement.

After hearing the CEC board chairman's explanation at the confirmation hearing yesterday, Hocog added his voice to those calling for the urgency of Remedio Sablan's nomination to ensure that there will be quorum before anything is affirmed with this runoff election.

Jesus Sablan further explained the urgency after hearing the testimony of Felipe Q. Atalig, who was the only one who opposed Remedio Sablan's appointment.

Atalig noted the lack of urgency as he understood that the CEC board will certify the runoff election results today, Thursday.

Atalig said upon hearing the testimony of some people supporting Remedio Sablan's appointment, the preponderance of evidence does not support the need for the committee to act expeditiously. Atalig said witnesses have failed to justify the urgency and need to confirm Remedio Sablan.

He said there is no more election until 2024 and that there is a CEC board quorum so there is no need to have a new commissioner at this time when there is a new administration.

Atalig said the committee should reject the appointment of Remedio Sablan, who has been appointed by the lame duck administration.

"Give a chance to this new administration to function in accordance to their wishes—rebuilding trust," Atalig said.

Committee chair Sen. Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian) said he wants to make it clear that they are not here to entertain emergency matters.

"Whatever comes to my committee, we will entertain. And that's the reason why we allowed the members of the general public to participate whether you're in support or not in support," Cruz said.

Last Nov. 29, Torres appointed Remedio Sablan to serve as a member of the CEC board representing the Third Senatorial District, or Saipan and the Northern Islands. If confirmed by the Senate, she will serve a four-year term, which will expire on July 21, 2025.

"I dedicated a little over 50 years of my life until I retired. I have served our people in many different capacities except for an elected position," Remedio Sablan.

She added that she has been privileged to have contributed in the success of the Public School System while she was a member of the Parent-Teacher Advisory Council for several years.

Remedio Sablan assured the committee that she will educate herself thoroughly on the laws and regulations of CEC.

"I still have a strong desire and energy to contribute in this capacity I look forward to," she said.

Aside from Jesus Sablan, the others who testified yesterday in support of the appointee were Office of the Governor's Office representative Jason Palacios, CEC executive director Kayla S. Igitol, Commonwealth Casino Commission board member Mariano Taitano, and John Oliver Gonzales.

SUED

From Page 1

lawsuit submitted to the Superior Court yesterday, Manibusan, in his official capacity as the attorney general of the Commonwealth, claims that the CNMI was harmed because of the authorized overtime pay received by Hunter.

The OAG further argues that Hunter was not entitled to overtime and so should be directed to return all the money he was paid in overtime.

"[Manibusan] brings this action on behalf of the people of the Commonwealth, who are harmed and have been harmed by the excessive compensation of Robert H. Hunter, a Commonwealth government employee who was not entitled to typhoon emergency premium compensation, overtime, or extra pay for work performed during the declared major disaster and state of significant emergency relating to Super Typhoon Yutu, or for work directly involved with typhoon recovery and repair work and providing assistance to those members of the Commonwealth adversely affected by Super Typhoon Yutu," said Glass.

The OAG wants the court to order Hunter to return the $17,147.90 he received in illegal overtime compensation.

Manibusan is also seeking a declaratory judgment from the Superior Court declaring that the personnel regulations authorizing payment of typhoon emergency premium pay, overtime, and extra pay do not apply to gubernatorial appointees; that the director of Personnel and the governor lack the authority to authorize additional compensation except as provided by law; and that compensation in excess of the salary ceiling cannot be authorized except as provided by law.

According to the lawsuit, Hunter's total compensation in fiscal years 2019 and 2020 exceeded his statutory salary of $54,000, which is against the law.

In total, Hunter allegedly received typhoon premium pay in the total gross amount of $17,147.90, with $14,636.08 being paid in fiscal year 2019 and $2,511.82 paid in fiscal year 2020.

However, all pay was for work performed during fiscal year 2019 from Oct. 23, 2018, through Jan. 23, 2019.

Glass states that Hunter received typhoon emergency premium pay on multiple occasions and his typhoon emergency premium pay was paid at a rate of 2.5 times his base salary.

On Dec. 19, 2018, the defendant received gross wages in the amount of $3,777.47 as typhoon emergency premium pay.

On Dec. 21, 2018, Hunter received gross wages in the amount of $5,536.40 as typhoon emergency premium pay.

On Dec. 29, 2018, the DCCA secretary received gross wages in the amount of $1,363.00 as typhoon emergency premium pay

On Dec. 31, 2018, he again received gross wages in the amount of $3,959.21 as typhoon emergency premium pay.

Finally, on Nov. 1, 2019, the defendant allegedly received gross wages in the amount of $2,511.82 as typhoon emergency premium pay.

Hunter, who is also a former chief policy adviser of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, currently lives the U.S. mainland.

PAGEANT

From Page 1

Domestic & Sexual Violence told *Saipan Tribune* in a WhatsApp interview that she is "very grateful."

"Grateful to the people of the Marianas for showing their love and support. I couldn't have gotten this far without their belief in me. I'm excited to be making history as well! This is a significant win for the Northern Marianas because this was the very first placement of the Northern Marianas at Miss International and in any Big 4 Pageants," said Delos Santos.

In the Top 15, Delos Santos joined contestants from France, Finland, New Zealand, Germany, the Philippines, Cabo Verde, Peru, Jamaica, Colombia, Costa Rica, Canada, Dominican Republic, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

A total of 66 contestants joined the pageant, with Germany's Jasmin Selberg being crowned as Miss International 2022.

First runner-up was Miss Cabo Verde, Stephany Amado. Second runner-up was Miss Peru, Tatiana Calmell. Third runner-up went to Miss Colombia, Natalia Lopez Cordona, and fourth runner-up went to Miss Dominican Republic, Celinee Santos Frias.

Delos Santos was crowned the 2021 Miss Marianas on March 13, 2021, besting seven other contestants at the Stellar Marianas-organized pageant.

HIGH

From Page 3

Thursday morning through Sunday afternoon.

These will create dangerous swimming and surfing conditions and localized beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. Inexperienced swimmers should remain out of the water due to dangerous surf conditions.

Th public is encouraged to stay out of the water along north and east facing reef lines. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help.

Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid boating in hazardous conditions. ***(PR)***

A REPORT ON BOOSTing OUR ECONOMY

AMOUNTS REQUESTED THROUGHOUT SAIPAN, TINIAN, AND ROTA

SMALL BUSINESS
Total Number of Applications

SAIPAN	1425 APPLICANTS	$264,553,102.78 AMOUNT REQUESTED
TINIAN	204 APPLICANTS	$21,671,676.65 AMOUNT REQUESTED
ROTA	100 APPLICANTS	$11,522,263.08 AMOUNT REQUESTED

NON PROFITS
Total Number of Applications

SAIPAN	62 APPLICANTS	$29,029,913.32 AMOUNT REQUESTED
TINIAN	4 APPLICANTS	$237,150.00 AMOUNT REQUESTED
ROTA	2 APPLICANTS	$145,213.00 AMOUNT REQUESTED

FFR
(Fisher, Farmer, Rancher)
Total Number of Applications

SAIPAN	1761 APPLICANTS	$880,500.00 AMOUNT REQUESTED
TINIAN	258 APPLICANTS	$129,000.00 AMOUNT REQUESTED
ROTA	411 APPLICANTS	$205,500.00 AMOUNT REQUESTED

OVERALL TOTAL BOOST APPLICATIONS

4227 APPLICANTS	$328,374,318.83 AMOUNT REQUESTED

STATISTICS AS OF DEC. 1, 2022

APPLICATIONS CONTINUE TO BE REVIEWED. NO APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN DENIED. THE BOOST PROGRAM IS MADE POSSIBLE BY GOVERNOR RALPH DLG. TORRES AND IS SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.

BOOST

A REPORT ON BOOSTing OUR ECONOMY

TOTAL AMOUNTS AWARDED (SMALL BUSINESS) THROUGHOUT SAIPAN, TINIAN, AND ROTA

241

SMALL BUSINESSES HAVE BEEN AWARDED WITHIN THE CNMI

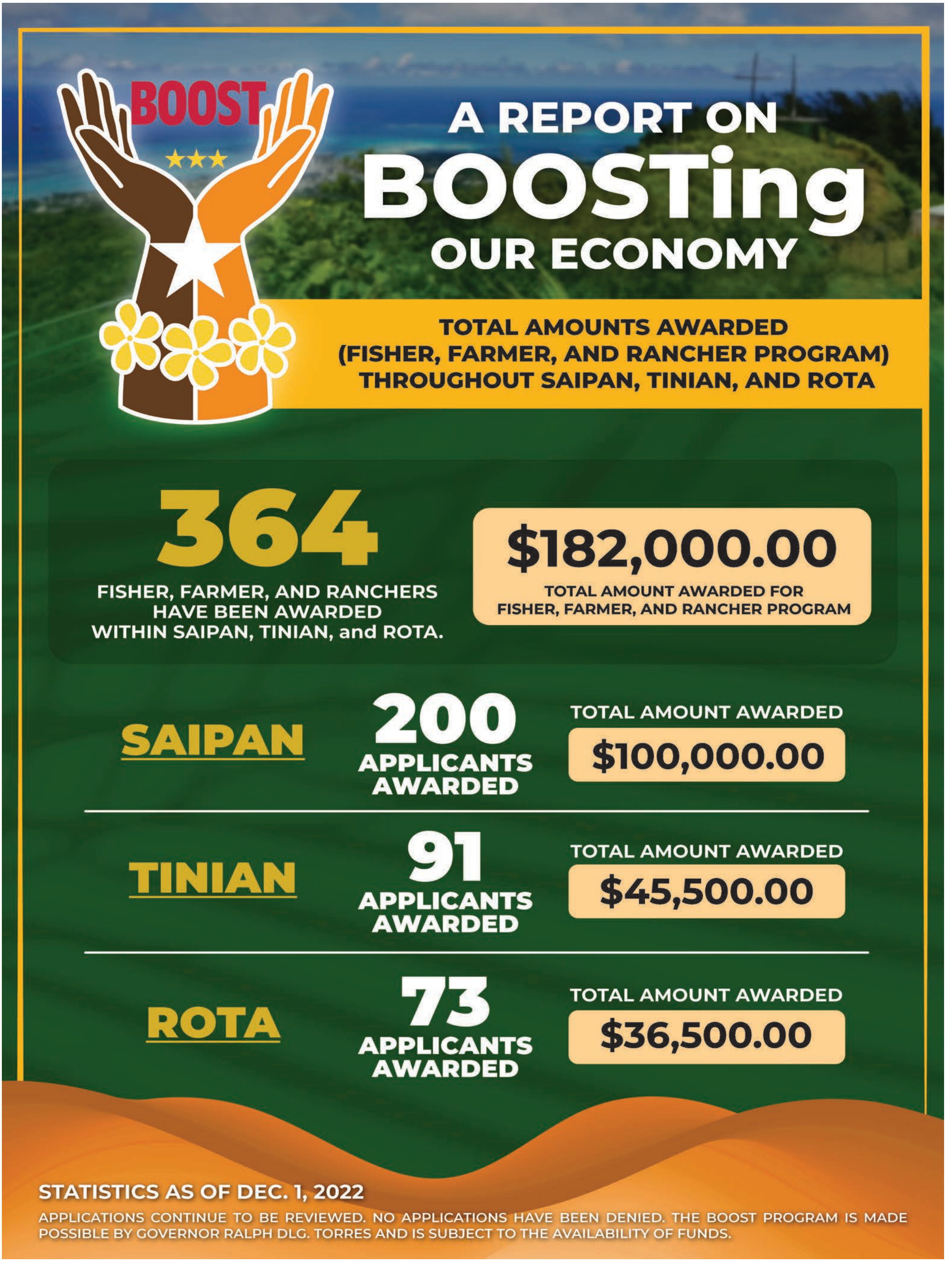
$10,490,000 AMOUNT AWARDED

AVERAGE AWARD FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

$40,000

STATISTICS AS OF DEC. 1, 2022

APPLICATIONS CONTINUE TO BE REVIEWED. NO APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN DENIED. THE BOOST PROGRAM IS MADE POSSIBLE BY GOVERNOR RALPH DLG. TORRES AND IS SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.


BOOST
A REPORT ON
BOOSTing
OUR ECONOMY
TOTAL AMOUNTS AWARDED
(FISHER, FARMER, AND RANCHER PROGRAM)
THROUGHOUT SAIPAN, TINIAN, AND ROTA
364
FISHER, FARMER, AND RANCHERS
HAVE BEEN AWARDED
WITHIN SAIPAN, TINIAN, and ROTA.
$182,000.00
TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED FOR
FISHER, FARMER, AND RANCHER PROGRAM
SAIPAN
200
APPLICANTS
AWARDED
TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED
$100,000.00
TINIAN
91
APPLICANTS
AWARDED
TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED
$45,500.00
ROTA
73
APPLICANTS
AWARDED
TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED
$36,500.00
STATISTICS AS OF DEC. 1, 2022
APPLICATIONS CONTINUE TO BE REVIEWED. NO APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN DENIED. THE BOOST PROGRAM IS MADE POSSIBLE BY GOVERNOR RALPH DLG. TORRES AND IS SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.

BOOST
A REPORT ON
BOOSTing
OUR ECONOMY
The BOOST Program is available to many in the CNMI.
This also includes many business categories.
BUSINESS CATEGORIES
• Apartment rentals
• Auto Rental
• Auto Repair
• B & B
• Bakeries
• Boat Charter
• Cafés
• Clothing Stores
• Construction
• Home Rental
• Hotels
• Restaurants
• Retail General Merchandise
• Wholesales
APPLICATIONS CONTINUE TO BE REVIEWED. NO APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN DENIED. THE BOOST PROGRAM IS MADE POSSIBLE BY GOVERNOR RALPH DLG. TORRES AND IS SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS
STATISTICS AS OF DEC. 1, 2022

A REPORT ON BOOSTing OUR ECONOMY

The BOOST Program is available to many in the CNMI.
Listings below list some jobs that fall under certain categories.

Fishers

- Angler
- Spear Fisherman
- Talaya Fisherman
- Shore Fisherman

Non-Profit

- Youth Development
- Marine Sports
- Mental Health
- Culture & Language

Construction

- Carpenters
- Architects
- Masoners
- Fabricators

Tourism Related

- Tourism Companies
- Dive Shops

APPLICATIONS CONTINUE TO BE REVIEWED. NO APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN DENIED. THE BOOST PROGRAM IS MADE POSSIBLE BY GOVERNOR RALPH DLG. TORRES AND IS SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

STATISTICS AS OF DEC. 1, 2022

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

Freeloading tech giants should pay for the local news they use

It's no secret that local journalism is in deep trouble. More than two newspapers are disappearing each week, on average, and more than a fifth of Americans live in "news deserts"—communities that have lost, or are in the process of losing, their local news providers. As a result, lies and other misinformation proliferate, damaging American democracy.

Much of the money that once supported local journalism now goes to Alphabet Inc.'s Google and Meta Platforms' Facebook. These social media companies often build user engagement by linking to the work of local journalists but typically siphon off ads and other revenues for themselves. Predictably, they want to keep it that way.

Faced with a bipartisan bill that would have helped to level the playing field, the tech giants flexed their lobbying muscles last week and succeeded in getting it shelved—at least for the moment. We're staying hopeful despite the setback because the bill is so badly needed.

The Journalism Competition and Preservation Act would create an antitrust exemption enabling news organizations to come together for the purpose of negotiating payments from companies distributing their content online. The relief would be temporary, sunsetting after a period of years, so that local journalism isn't wiped out before it can develop a sustainable business model.

We understand that readers might question our support of a bill that would help fund our work. . Still, the public interest in this legislation is beyond dispute. Doing nothing while organizations with overwhelming market power stamp out local journalism threatens the foundations of our country.

Legislation such as the JCPA is working as advertised in other countries. In Australia, a bill approved in 2021 resulted in payments of more than $140 million from the online platforms to news companies. The European Union, too, has proven the legislative approach can be effective. Canada and New Zealand are considering similar measures.

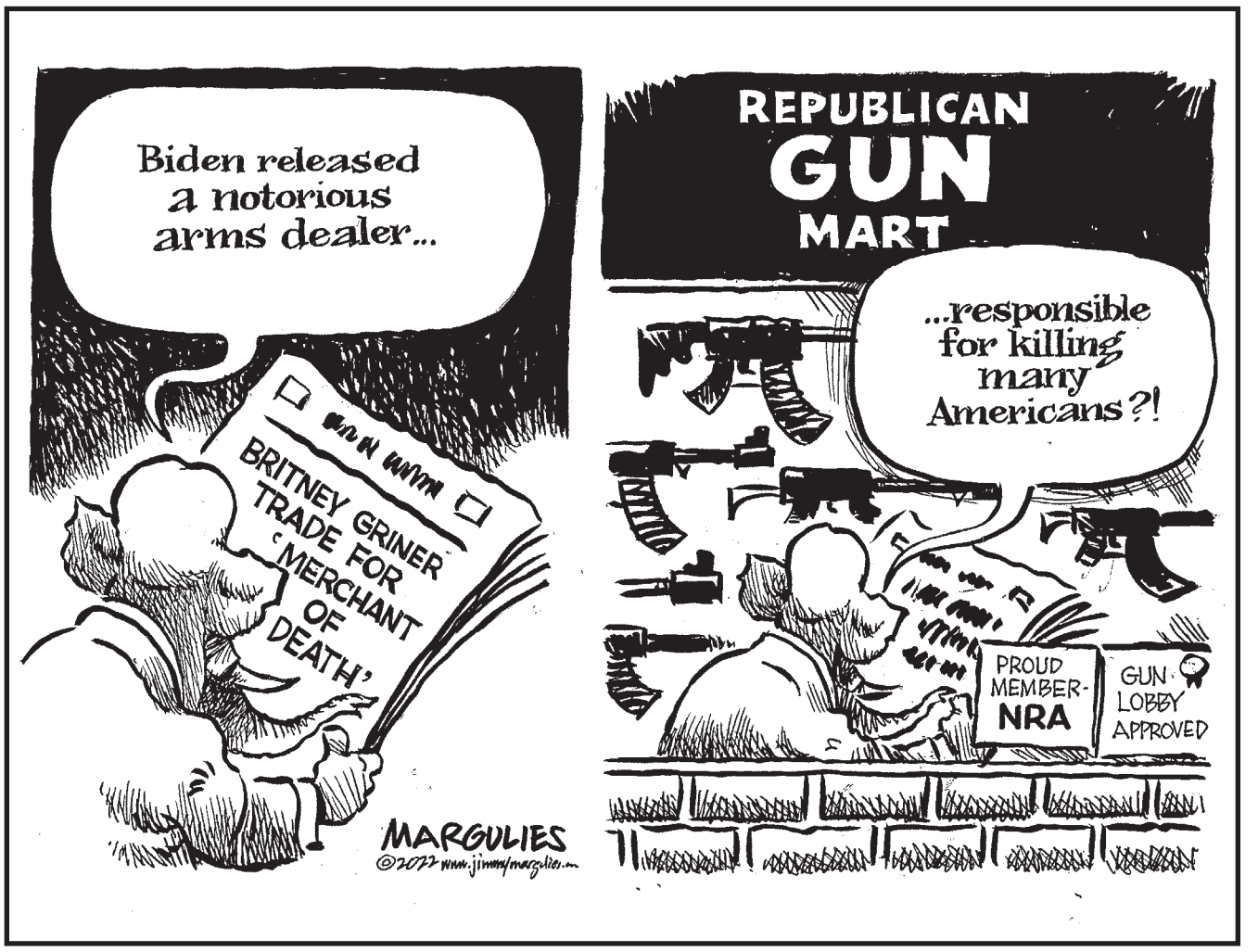
The pushback from Google and Facebook against these pro-local-news initiatives has been, above all, revealing. No reasonable person should doubt the power of those huge global companies to control the news and other information we see.

Google, for instance, contested EU efforts to force it to pay for news content shown in search results by shutting down its Google News site in Spain. The EU stood strong, proceeding with new online copyright rules. France ordered Google to negotiate, and the company earlier this year agreed to pay publishers for content.

Facebook fought the legislation in Australia by shutting down the sharing of news on its platforms. In the process, it blocked access to the pages of charities, health departments, local governments and even Facebook itself, prompting an outcry as vital content was suddenly unavailable.

Last week, Facebook used the "take our ball and go home" threat to attack the JCPA. As part of a longer statement blasting the legislation, the company threatened to "remove news from our platform altogether rather than submit to govern-

See FREELOADING on Next Page



By sharing their genetic risks, Hemsworth, Jolie are raising awareness of testing

By ROBERT C. GREEN
Chicago Tribune

Dr. Robert C. Green is a medical geneticist, physician-scientist and professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School who directs the Preventive Genomics Clinic at Mass General Brigham and the Precision Population Health Initiative at Ariadne Labs.

When actor Chris Hemsworth, aka Thor, God of Thunder, agreed to host a National Geographic series about extending the human life span, he didn't expect to discover a genetic risk of his own. But that's what happened as Hemsworth revealed on an episode of "Limitless" that he carries a common change in the APOE gene associated with an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease.

Hemsworth almost opted to keep his finding private, but in the end he decided to go public, a decision reminiscent of actor Angelina Jolie, who in 2013 revealed that she carries a change in the gene called BRCA1 that confers a high risk for breast and ovarian cancer. Jolie, another actor whose roles have included superheroes on screen, chose to have risk-reducing surgeries and inspired many to get similar testing, and her example sparked broad discussion about the power of genes to offer predictions about the future risk for cancer.

Now, the complementary experiences of these two "superheroes" offer a chance to clarify a few key principles around genetic testing for the public.

Genetics is not a crystal ball

Most genetic changes, including the ones discovered in Jolie and Hemsworth, do not guarantee that the individual will develop the disease.

For example, with the BRCA1 gene change that she had, Jolie's risk of breast cancer before surgery was increased from a lifetime risk of 13% to between 55%-72%. With his APOE gene changes, Hemsworth's risk of developing Alzheimer's disease is higher than most, but by some estimates it is still only 30%-55% so the odds are still good that he will avoid that fate. Most genetic information helps estimate risk, but does not signal a preordained outcome.

Treatable and untreatable conditions

Some people want to know "everything," but others only want to know genetic risk information if you can "do something about it," by which they usually mean a medical intervention to prevent or slow the disease in question.

In 2013, I helped create an official list of what is now 78 genes for "treatable" conditions that has become the basis for many screening programs using genetics. The APOE gene for risk of Alzheimer's disease is not on that list but the BRCA1 gene is. So if people want to learn their risk for treatable cancers, treatable heart conditions and other treatable possibilities, but would prefer to avoid learning about their risk for untreatable conditions like Alzheimer's disease, that's an easy option.

Surprisingly, many people want to know their gene status for untreatable conditions like Alzheimer's disease for life planning or in order to be first in line for new clinical trials or treatments that may emerge in the future. The discovery of personal genetic risk is less distressing than people imagine and has a way of galvanizing both passion and progress.

Technology matters

Popular direct-to-consumer genetic testing companies such as Ancestry or 23andMe are to be commended for demystifying and democratizing genetics using array technology that can detect some DNA changes but not others.

For example, 23andMe screens for the three most common breast and ovarian cancer gene changes, which has undoubtedly saved lives; but it does not report on over a thousand other such changes in the same genes. The newer technologies of gene sequencing are more expensive but can read every letter of one or many genes, allowing the detection of many more people with changes that put them at risk for hereditary forms of cancer and heart disease.

Genetic risk and longevity

The quest for greater longevity is having a moment in our culture. Ironically, Hemsworth's experience with genetics in the context of the National Geographic show "Limitless," a show that highlights physical challenges to combat aging, reminds us of the underappreciated fact that all anti-aging efforts should be anchored first in the avoidance of premature and preventable death.

We have estimated that well over 2.5% of Americans carry

See SHARING on Next Page

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Guns and logic

By LAWRENCE GOLDSTONE
THE FULCRUM

Ignoring the nation's epidemic of mass shootings, in June 2022, by a 6-3 margin along ideological lines, the Supreme Court struck down a New York law that required anyone seeking a license to carry a concealed handgun outside the home to demonstrate a specific justification for the permit. Under the law an applicant could not merely use a vague, unsupported claim of "for self-defense," but needed to document why concealed carry was necessary, such as being subjected to threats or being followed by a stalker.

Such a law was not unique to New York. Seven other states (including California and Massachusetts) and many cities, representing one-quarter of the nation's population, also required a demonstrable need to carry concealed weapons outside the home. Without such limiting laws, since anyone could claim a desire for self-defense, there was no way to prevent even those of questionable mental health from stuffing a handgun into a pocket or purse for every trip to the post office or a 7-11.

For more than two centuries, the Second Amendment's "right to bear arms" applied only to a "well ordered militia," the need of which was widespread in the 1780s. But in 2008, Justice Antonin Scalia, speaking for a 5-4 majority in D.C. v. Heller, ruled that a gun kept in the home for self-defense by a private citizen was a protected right. In his majority opinion in the New York case (New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen), Justice Clarence Thomas extended that right to streets and shopping malls. In adopting the most expansive view of the Second Amendment in American history, Thomas, as had Scalia, ignored the precedent in U.S. v. Miller, a 1939 case in which a unanimous court ruled weapons with no military purpose—to wit, a sawed-off shotgun—did not come under the amendment's purview.

Thomas claimed to be concerned about the subjectivity of allowing New York officials to decide whether someone applying for a concealed carry license had genuine need, while refusing to exhibit a similar concern as to whether a trigger-happy would-be vigilante, such as George Zimmerman, the man who gunned down Trayvon Martin, had any need at all.

To prevent its urban areas from turning into a modern Dodge City, New York responded by passing a new law prohibiting guns on private property unless the owner explicitly approved. In addition, to carry a weapon in public required a character test and 18 hours of training. With a friendly Supreme Court lurking in the wings, Gun Owners of America sued and, in October, U.S. District Judge Glenn Suddaby sided with them once more. The George W. Bush appointee ruled, incredibly, that New York could not ban guns from such locations as Times Square, public transit, libraries, playgrounds and public parks. Although his ruling is being appealed, there is not much hope from a Supreme Court that has abandoned both logic and law to promote its political agenda.

The real problem here is that an amendment clearly written for one purpose has been shapeshifted into another and, even worse, the original meaning of the amendment has virtually disappeared from both jurisprudence and public discourse. As a result, Second Amendment law has descended into the preposterous.

One of the most important tools for those who analyze the law, either from the bench or in the classroom, is logic. Sometimes directly, often tortuously, judges and law professors wend their way through the densest rhetoric, examining arguments for logical flaws, from which they may then base a decision to arrive at, to quote John Marshall, "what the law is." But there is a flaw in formal logic that is not often cited in legal analysis—reductio ad absurdum, an argument that appears to follow all the rules but leads to an absurd conclusion. And the conclusion that the Second Amendment protects the right of gun-toting citizens to drag the nation into near anarchy or for government to be forced to stand helplessly by during an epidemic of mass shootings is just that—absurd. If this were theater, Samuel Beckett would write the play.

For example, if one examines the wording of the amendment, there is no definition of what arms "the people" may bear. Granting the assumption that the term "bear" means to hold personally, so that driving into the Walmart parking lot with a howitzer hooked to back of a truck or in a tank would not pass muster—although some gun people would almost surely disagree—what about a rocket-propelled grenade launcher strapped to one's back, or a flamethrower like the one used by Leonardo DiCaprio in "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood"? There is no specific prohibition against such behavior, and there are certainly those in this country who are convinced they have the right to do just that. (I've spoken to some of them.)

One hopes that most gun fanciers would brush off this argument and acknowledge that shoulder-fired missiles are not covered by the amendment since, outside of Avengers movies, such weaponry does not have a legitimate use for self-defense. Thomas used the self-defense argument as well. Not only is it far from certain, however, that gun rights groups—or the Supreme Court—would accept even those limitations, the Second Amendment makes no mention of self-defense as a condition for bearing arms. The only condition seems to be that bearing arms should have some relationship to that illusive "well ordered militia."

But then, what defines a militia? Is it strictly a body of armed civilians sanctioned by federal, state, or local government, or can it be a private, non-governmental group of "patriots," such as the Proud Boys? If the latter is the case, and the decision in New York case is as it seems, these groups can gather, march or demonstrate with whatever weaponry they wish virtually anywhere, including in Times Square on New Year's Eve. In addition, if, for example, they choose to gather near voting drop boxes or polling stations brandishing weapons, as did some right-wing patriots in Arizona, does the government have no recourse?

While many of these scenarios might seem extreme, even ridiculous, by most mainstream Americans—at least one hopes they would be—there is nothing in the text of the amendment as interpreted by the current court to prevent any of them.

The Supreme Court's approval rating is at an all-time low. With rulings such as those that elevate the rights of gun owners over those of ordinary citizens who wish to do their Christmas shopping without fear of being slaughtered in H&M, it is easy to see why.

Lawrence Goldstone is the author of the forthcoming Not White Enough: The Long Shameful Road to Japanese American Internment.

Lost Pride and Less Expectations

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

"The broken heart, you think you will die, but you just keep living, day after day after terrible day."
—from Charles Dickens' novel, G*reat Expectations*

Less Than Great Expectations

My highest expectations brought heartache
no reciprocal love, no penny paper valentine
how many times did I make that mistake
hurt feelings as joy and sadness combine

Sexual attraction was not always the root
for hours I pondered fields of wildflowers
her TV absorption made me seem moot
I'm wet from walking in thundershowers

It is not a forever feeling or final frustration
still some chance for some mutual feelings
a glance at a dance a slight manifestation
a chance to find out with what I'm dealing

High and low tides reflect love's fluctuations
as I learn a lesson to lower my expectations.

Perspicacity: My Pride and Punishment

I am shrewd but not always in the mood
you are astute and your humor is cute
I try hard to ignore myself in the mirror
you make your kindness much clearer
perhaps together we both will as well
we will all get thrown under some bus
we will find out which one soon enough
'I and Thou' and Martin Buber*cry and try
we will always be with who truly cares
who knows where the war of words goes
I know everything and less than nothing
my pride has little shame left I can blame
I lost it years ago in wars with my ego.

**Martin Buber (1878-1965) was an Austrian-Jewish and Israeli philosopher best known for his philosophy of dialogue, a form of existentialism centered on the distinctions between the I - THOU relationship and the I - IT relationship.—Wikipedia.*

SHARING

From Page 10

genetic markers for elevated risks of treatable cancer and heart conditions that are easily detectable by cost-effective medical sequencing. Yet doctors and health care systems have been slow to adopt preventive genomics because physicians are not confident about ordering and interpreting such tests and most proactive genetic testing is not yet reimbursed by health insurance.

Hemsworth and Jolie play superheroes in films but it takes exceptional real-world courage to share their own health issues. Their generosity is accelerating awareness and acceptance of a future where we do not wait to respond to the ravages of so many diseases but rather anticipate, predict and prevent them through genomics.

FREELOADING

From Page 10

ment mandated negotiations."

It's not too late to call the bluff. Bipartisan group of sponsors had teed up the JCPA for passage under the National Defense Authorization Act, an annual funding bill. That's when the powerful lobby representing Big Tech swung into action. Also opposing the measure were some conservative Republicans hostile to the mainstream media, and some liberal Democrats skeptical of news chains that have laid off journalists and reduced coverage as revenues have flagged.

Though the details are still being finalized, sponsors from both parties said they had worked out some key differences. The final bill would sidestep the issue of content moderation, allaying the fears of conservatives about censorship and of liberals about hate speech. The measure would apply only to companies specializing in local news, including newspaper chains and TV station groups, not big national outlets such as The Wall Street Journal or The New York Times that are less threatened by Big Tech monopolies. And, as is should, it would require local news providers receiving these funds from the tech giants to invest in newsrooms, not merely boost corporate profits.

Congress is unlikely to approve the JCPA as a stand-alone bill, given the powerful opposition, and, with divided chambers as of next year, Big Tech has the upper hand in running out the clock. The last hope for this session could be including it in an omnibus spending bill that must pass by later this month to keep the government running, though the reckoning could be postponed if Congress agrees to a continuing resolution.

As with any business facing an uncertain future, local journalism will need to innovate to survive, and that process is underway.

Congress, give news organizations the breathing room required to continue providing the factual local content that Google and Facebook users want—and need—to see.

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FILE NOT FOUND

FILE NOT FOUND

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Business

Maximize your fun at Fun Max

LEIGH GASES

Gashapon toy-vending machines that dispense tiny figurines of different anime, manga, or cartoon characters for $2 to $5 a pop, only available at Fun Max located next to Boarderline in the Joeten Hafa Adai Shopping Center.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

LEIGH GASES

Fun Max is located next to Boarderline in the Joeten Hafa Adai Shopping Center in Garapan, which is your one-stop shop for anime, K-pop, and cartoon items just in time for the holiday shopping season.

Fans of anime, K-pop, or those just into the latest trends will be delighted as Fun Max is open to maximize anyone's fun without searching too far and stretching their budget through a wide range of affordable items that can be used at home, work, play, or as gifts.

Opened last Oct. 1 at the former Iridescent store, next to Boarderline located in the Joeten Hafa Adai Shopping Center in Garapan, Fun Max is stocked and ready just in time for the holiday shopping season.

Fun Max manager Jay Li said that the inspiration for the shop is that he feels it's "difficult to look for gifts when it's a friend's or family member's birthday or Christmas."

"Our stuff is following the trend, it's new, special, and interesting," said Li about the shop's items.

One fun interactive feature in the store is the Gashapon or capsule toy-vending machine which is visible from the entrance.

Eighteen vending machines with various tiny figurines of different anime, manga, or cartoon characters are dispensed when fed with tokens available from the money to the token changer next to the machine. What you get is a surprise and is sure to be worth the $2 to $5 price range.

Some of the items available in the shop include figurines from the Japanese manga/anime series One Piece, Naruto, Demon Slayer, Attack on Titan, Pokemon, and others, along with Funko Pops of various characters, cartoon and game characters, Marvel superheroes, mystery boxes, keychains, stationary items, stuffed toys, clothing, backpacks, puzzles, and posters, among others.

A variety of items big and small also sees a wide range of prices—with the cheapest item at $2 to the most expensive item at $300.

Specifically for the anime and K-pop-themed clothing, the price range is from $28 to $56, while the backpacks range from $30 to $48. For the figurines, the price range is from $5 to $80 and the different sized stuffed toys range from $8 to $85.

Black Friday last November saw the whole shop at 20% off, and with the ongoing holiday shopping season, a Christmas sale on selected items is set from Dec. 21 to 24. Operation hours are from 10am to 8pm daily.

Along with bringing new items to the shop, Li said that they are open to suggestions from customers and may be able to bring what they suggest.

For more information, call (670) 488-2018, email funmaxsaipan@gmail.com, check out their Facebook page: Fun Max.

FTX founder charged in scheme to defraud crypto investors

NEW YORK (AP)—The U.S. government charged Samuel Bankman-Fried, the founder and former CEO of cryptocurrency exchange FTX, with a host of financial crimes on Tuesday, alleging he intentionally deceived customers and investors to enrich himself and others, while playing a central role in the company's multibillion-dollar collapse.

Federal prosecutors said Bankman-Fried devised "a scheme and artifice to defraud" FTX's customers and investors beginning in 2019, the year it was founded. He illegally diverted their money to cover expenses, debts and risky trades at the crypto hedge fund he started in 2017, Alameda Research, and to make lavish real estate purchases and large political donations, prosecutors said in a 13-page indictment.

Bankman-Fried, 30, was arrested Monday in the Bahamas at the request of the U.S. government, and remains in custody after being denied bail.

He has been charged with eight criminal violations, ranging from wire fraud to money laundering to conspiracy to commit fraud. If convicted of all the charges, Bankman-Fried — referred to by crypto enthusiasts as "SBF" — could face decades in jail.

At a news conference on Tuesday, U.S. Attorney Damian Williams in New York called it "one of the biggest frauds in American history," and said the investigation is ongoing and fast-moving.

Nation

Biden signs gay marriage law, calls it 'a blow vs hate'

WASHINGTON (AP)—A celebratory crowd of thousands bundled up on a chilly Tuesday afternoon to watch President Joe Biden sign gay marriage legislation into law, a joyful ceremony that was tempered by the backdrop of an ongoing conservative backlash over gender issues.

"This law and the love it defends strike a blow against hate in all its forms," Biden said on the South Lawn of the White House. "And that's why this law matters to every single American."

Singers Sam Smith and Cyndi Lauper performed. Vice President Kamala Harris recalled officiating at a lesbian wedding in San Francisco. And the White House played a recording of Biden's television interview from a decade ago, when he caused a political furor by unexpectedly disclosing his support for gay marriage. Biden was vice president at the time, and President Barack Obama had not yet endorsed the idea.

"I got in trouble," Biden joked of that moment. Three days later, Obama himself publicly endorsed gay marriage.

Lawmakers from both parties attended Tuesday's ceremony, reflecting the growing acceptance of same-sex unions, once among the country's most contentious issues.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., wore the same purple tie to the ceremony that he wore to his daughter Alison's wedding. She and her wife are expecting their first child in the spring.

"Thanks to the millions out there who spent years pushing for change, and thanks to the dogged work of my colleagues, my grandchild will get to live in a world that respects and honors their mothers' marriage," he said.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told the crowd that "inside maneuvering only takes us so far," and she thanked activists adding impetus with "your impatience, your persistence and your patriotism."

Despite Tuesday's excitement, there was concern about the nationwide proliferation of conservative policies on gender issues at the state level.

Biden criticized the "callous, cynical laws introduced in the states targeting transgender children, terrifying families and criminalizing doctors who give children the care they need."

"Racism, antisemitism, homophobia, transphobia, they're all connected," Biden said. "But the antidote to hate is love."

Among the attendees were the owner of Club Q, a gay nightclub in Colorado where five people were killed in a shooting last month, and two survivors of the attack. The suspect has been charged with hate crimes.

"It's not lost on me that our struggle for freedom hasn't been achieved," said Kelley Robinson, president of the Human Rights Campaign. "But this is a huge step forward, and we have to celebrate the victories we achieve and use that to fuel the future of the fight."

Robinson attended the ceremony with her wife and 1-year-old child.

"Our kids are watching this moment," she said. "It's very special to have them here and show them that we're on the right side of history."

The new law is intended to safeguard gay marriages if the U.S. Supreme Court ever reverses Obergefell v. Hodges, its 2015 decision legalizing same-sex unions nationwide. The new law also protects interracial marriages. In 1967, the Supreme Court in Loving v. Virginia struck down laws in 16 states barring interracial marriage.

The signing marks the culmination of a monthslong bipartisan effort sparked by the Supreme Court's decision in June to overturn Roe v. Wade, the 1973 ruling that made abortion available across the country.

Lawmakers announce 'framework' on bill to keep gov't open

WASHINGTON (AP)—Lawmakers leading the negotiations on a bill to fund the federal government for the current fiscal year announced Tuesday they're reached agreement on a "framework" that should allow them to complete work on the bill over the next week and avoid a government shutdown.

Congress faces a midnight Friday deadline to pass a spending bill to prevent a partial government shutdown. The two chambers are expected to pass another short-term measure before then to keep the government running through Dec. 23, which will allow negotiators time to complete work on the full-year bill.

"Now, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees will work around the clock to negotiate the details of final 2023 spending bills that can be supported by the House and Senate and receive President Biden's signature," said Rep. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, the Democratic chair of the House Appropriations Committee.

Earlier in the day, Senate leaders said lawmakers from the two parties were nearing an agreement, but Republicans warned Democrats that lawmakers would need to complete their work by Dec. 22 or they would only support a short-term extension into early next year. That would give House Republicans more leverage over what's in the legislation, since they will be in the majority then.

"We intend to be on the road going home on the 23rd. We intend not to be back here between Christmas and New Year's, and if we can't meet that deadline, we would be happy to pass a short-term (resolution) into early next year," said Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the Republican leader in the Senate.

McConnell voiced confidence Republicans would be able to meet their priorities of increasing spending on defense without "having to pay a bonus above what President Biden asked for" on non-defense priorities. He said Democrats were willing to accept that because they had previously passed two bills on a party-line basis that allow for more government spending on various domestic priorities.

Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., said last week that the two parties were about $25 billion apart in what is expected to be about a $1.65 trillion package, not including mandatory spending on programs such as Social Security and Medicare. However, Democrats in their statements did not indicate what topline spending number had been reached in the framework announced Tuesday.

FILE NOT FOUND

Asia

AS VIRUS SURGES

China reduces COVID case number reporting

BEIJING (AP)—China's National Health Commission scaled down its daily COVID-19 report starting Wednesday in response to a sharp decline in PCR testing since the government eased anti-virus measures after daily cases hit record highs.

A notice on the commission's website said it stopped publishing daily figures on numbers of COVID-19 cases where no symptoms are detected since it was "impossible to accurately grasp the actual number of asymptomatic infected persons," which have generally accounted for the vast majority of new infections. The only numbers they're reporting are confirmed cases detected in public testing facilities.

This poses a key challenge for China as it relaxes its strict "zero-COVID" policy. With mass-PCR testing no longer obligatory and people with mild symptoms allowed to recuperate at home rather than in one of the field hospitals that became notorious for overcrowding and poor hygiene, it has grown more difficult to gauge the true number of cases.

Beijing's streets have grown eerily quiet, with lines forming outside fever clinics — the number of which has been increased from 94 to 303 — and at pharmacies, where cold and flu medications are harder to find.

Despite a push to boost vaccinations among the elderly, two centers set up in Beijing to administer shots were empty Tuesday except for medical personnel. Despite fears of a major outbreak, there was little evidence of a surge in patient numbers.

At the China-Japan Friendship Hospital's fever clinic in Beijing, a dozen people waited for nucleic acid test results. Nurses in full-body white protective gear checked in patients one by one.

A few kilometers (miles) south, at Chaoyang Hospital, about a dozen people waited in a line of blue tents, deflecting winds amid subzero temperatures. One person in the queue took out a bottle of disinfectant and sprayed it around her as she waited.

Across the street at Gaoji Baikang Pharmacy, around a dozen people waited in line for cough medication and Chinese herbal remedies. A sign at the front told waiting customers: "Avoid panic and hoarding, we are doing all we can to stock up to fulfill your medicinal needs." A man coming out had bought two packages of Lianhua Qingwen, a Chinese herbal remedy, saying that each customer was restricted from buying any more than that.

Inquiries to health hotlines have increased six-fold, according to state media.

Without asymptomatic cases being counted, China reported just 2,249 "confirmed" infections Wednesday, bringing the nation's total to 369,918 — more than double the level on Oct. 1. It has recorded 5,235 deaths — compared with 1.1 million in the United States.

China's government-supplied figures have not been independently verified and questions have been raised about whether the Communist Party has sought to minimize numbers of cases and deaths.

Since Tuesday, the U.S. consulates in the northeastern Chinese city of Shenyang and the central city of Wuhan have been offering only emergency services "in response to increased number of COVID-19 cases," the State Department said.

ASIAN BRIEFS

US, S. Korea, Japan to curb illicit N Korea cyber activities

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Senior diplomats from the United States, South Korea and Japan agreed Tuesday to boost efforts to curb North Korea's illicit cyber activities and other methods to finance its nuclear program and evade international sanctions.

Meeting in Indonesia's capital, the three envoys in charge of North Korea's nuclear program also agreed to strengthen their trilateral security cooperation in the face of North Korea's advancing nuclear and missile arsenals.

In his opening remarks, Sung Kim, the U.S. envoy who also serves as Washington's ambassador in Jakarta, said that North Korea's provocative run of missile tests this year has proven yet again that the North "presents one of the most serious security challenges in the region and beyond."

Calling North Korean threats "a global issue," Sung Kim said the challenges posed by North Korea can only be addressed when the international community stands together and speaks with one voice.

After the meeting, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the three envoys decided to "double down their efforts to block North Korea's financing of nuclear and missile programs via cyber activities and other means and its attempt to evade sanctions on the North."

North Korea has been under 11 rounds of United Nations sanctions imposed over its repeated nuclear and missile tests since 2006. South Korean officials said recently that North Korea has been turning to cybercrime and covert ship-to-ship transfers of unauthorized goods as a way to violate those U.N. sanctions.

Court denies govt aid for Nagasaki A-bomb survivors children

TOKYO (AP)—A Japanese court on Monday rejected a damages suit filed by a group of children of Nagasaki atomic bombing survivors seeking eligibility for government support for medical costs, saying hereditary radiation impact has not been proven.

A group of 28 people whose parents were exposed to radiation in the Aug. 9, 1945 U.S. atomic bombing filed a lawsuit in 2017, demanding the government include them as part of its medical support available to the survivors. Two of the plaintiffs who were cancer patients died during the trial.

The Nagasaki District Court said Monday that a possible hereditary radiation effect cannot be denied, but there is no established scientific consensus and that the government's exclusion of the plaintiffs from medical support is not unconstitutional.

The court, however, said it is up to the government to decide whether to expand financial support to include second-generation survivors.

The government has maintained that there is no scientific evidence showing hereditary impact of parents' radiation exposure to their children.

World

Man publicly hanged from crane amidst Iran protests

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—Iran executed a second prisoner on Monday convicted over crimes committed during the nationwide protests challenging the country's theocracy, publicly hanging him from a construction crane as a gruesome warning to others.

The execution of Majidreza Rahnavard came less than a month after he allegedly fatally stabbed two members of a paramilitary force after purportedly becoming angry about security forces killing protesters.

The development underscores the speed at which Iran now carries out death sentences handed down for those detained in the demonstrations that the government hopes to put down.

Activists warn that at least a dozen people already have been sentenced to death in closed-door hearings. At least 488 people have been killed since the demonstrations began in mid-September, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a group that's been monitoring the protests. Another 18,200 people have been detained by authorities.

Iran's Mizan news agency, which falls under the country's judiciary, published a collage of images of Rahnavard hanging from the crane, his hands and feet bound, a black bag over his head.

Masked security force members stood guard in front of concrete and metal barriers that held back a gathered crowd early Monday morning in the Iranian city of Mashhad.

Mizan alleged Rahnavard had stabbed two security force members to death Nov. 17 in Mashhad and wounded four others.

Footage aired on state TV showed a man chasing another around a street corner, then standing over him and stabbing him after he fell against a parked motorbike. Another showed the same man stabbing another immediately after. The assailant, which state TV alleged was Rahnavard, then fled.

The Mizan report identified the dead as "student" Basij, paramilitary volunteers under Iran's Revolutionary Guard. The Basij (ba-SEEJ') have deployed in major cities, attacking and detaining protesters, who in many cases have fought back.

A heavily edited state television report aired after Rahnavard's execution showed clips of him in the courtroom. In the video, he says he came to hate the Basijis after seeing video clips on social media of the forces beating and killing protesters.

The Mizan report accused Rahnavard of trying to flee to a foreign country when he was arrested.

Authorities report explosions in center of Ukrainian capital

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Ukrainian authorities reported explosions in the capital, Kyiv, on Wednesday, saying two administrative buildings were hit in a downtown district that is home to many government buildings.

Vitali Klitschko wrote in a post on Telegram that municipal teams were in place after the blasts, and officials said the attack involved Iranian-made Shahed drones like those that Ukrainian authorities say have been involved in other Russian strikes in the country.

Shrapnel from a drone damaged two administrative buildings in the central Shevchenkyvskyi district, the Kyiv city administration said on its Telegram channel. It was not immediately clear whether there were any casualties.

Regional Governor Oleksii Kuleba said Ukrainian forces had shot down 10 self-explosive drones over Kyiv and the region Wednesday.

The reported attacks come as Ukraine has faced a barrage of Russian air strikes across the country, largely targeting infrastructure, in recent weeks as well as continued fighting along the front lines in the eastern and southern regions.

U.S. officials said Tuesday the United States was poised to approve sending a Patriot missile battery to Ukraine, agreeing to an urgent request from Ukrainian leaders desperate for more robust weapons to shoot down incoming Russian missiles.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy pressed Western leaders as recently as Monday to provide more advanced weapons to help his country in its war with Russia. The Patriot would be the most advanced surface-to-air missile system the West has provided to Ukraine to help repel Russian aerial attacks in the war between the countries that erupted with Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24.

U.S. officials also said last week that Moscow has been looking to Iran to resupply the Russian military with drones and surface-to-surface missiles.

Ukrainian authorities said that during the latest round of volleys on Dec. 5, more than 60 of 70 strikes were intercepted by air defense systems.

Life & Style

Comedian and actor Adam Sandler to get 2023 Mark Twain

Over the years, The Mark Twain Prize for American Humor has gone to such luminaries as Richard Pryor, Carl Reiner, Whoopi Goldberg, Billy Crystal, George Carlin and Ellen DeGeneres. Next year, it's going to the guy who made us crack up as Happy Gilmour.

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts said Tuesday that Adam Sandler would receive the prestigious award at a gala on March 19.

Sandler

"Adam Sandler has entertained audiences for over three decades with his films, music, and his tenure as a fan favorite cast member on 'SNL,'" said Kennedy Center President Deborah F. Rutter in a statement. "Adam has created characters that have made us laugh, cry, and cry from laughing."

The 56-year-old actor-comedian, who this year starred in the well-received Netflix basketball drama-comedy "Hustle," has created a list of funny films, like "Happy Gilmore," "Billy Madison," "Grown Ups," "Big Daddy," "The Longest Yard" and "The Waterboy."

His role as Howard Ratner in "Uncut Gems" garnered Sandler several nominations and awards, including winning the National Board of Review and the Independent Spirit Award. ***(AP)***

Sigourney Weaver, James Cameron float on in 'Way of Water'

NEW YORK (AP)—To Sigourney Weaver, her friendship with James Cameron didn't really start on "Aliens," the 1986 film Cameron directed her in. It started after.

Weaver

"He was quite serious most of the time. He had a lot riding on that. England was all about Ridley Scott (the original's director) doing the next one," Weaver recalls. "It wasn't until we got to the Venice Film Festival where 'Aliens' was part of some program. We were having dinner afterward and I'm listening to Jim and I went, 'Wait a minute. You're funny? Where was this person all through those difficult months?'"

That their first movie—as fruitful as the final product was—wasn't the smoothest experience may have been partly due to Cameron's unconventional courtship of Weaver. When she wavered on returning as Ripley in the sequel, Cameron approached Arnold Schwarzenegger's agent, who also represented Weaver, with the idea of Schwarzenegger taking over the film series. It was a way, once word filtered back to her, to coax Weaver into signing on. The gambit worked.

"The first few weeks on 'Aliens' was a bit rocky while we tested each other," Cameron says. "After that, we've been fast friends forever."

That long-running friendship and collaboration reaches an unlikely pinnacle in "Avatar: The Way of the Water," Cameron's long-awaited oceanic opus. Though Weaver co-starred in Cameron's original 2009 "Avatar," her character, Dr. Grace Augustine was shot and killed by the end of the film. In 2010, while Cameron was sketching out what would eventually become plans for four more "Avatar" films, he met with Weaver to suggest a novel idea of how she might be reborn on Pandora.

Weaver would come back in an entirely new role: Kiri, the 14-year-old biological daughter of Grace's avatar. In the film, which opens in theaters Thursday, Weaver plays the Na'vi character, adopted by Jake Sully (Sam Worthington) and Neytiri (Zoe Saldaña). It's not easy logic to parse out. What, exactly, are the reproductive capacities of avatars?

"I had to jump through a few fiery hoops to get her on this movie. Not that she was unwilling, but in terms of narrative logic," says Cameron. "OK, she's the daughter of the avatar of Grace Augustine, you know what I mean? So of course she looks like Grace. Makes sense, right? Oh, by the way, you've got to be 14 years old."

But the end result of Cameron's narrative logic is simple enough: Sigourney Weaver is back in the "Avatar" fold. And not only that, through performance capture she's playing a wide-eyed teenage Na'vi who looks a little like an alien Winona Ryder. As Weaver likes to say, in science fiction, "Everything is possible."

"I know that no one but Jim would have cast me as a 14-year-old. As he said, people think I'm kind of serious and strong and all those things. He knows that that's just malarkey," says Weaver, smiling. "He said, 'This will be easy for you.'"

Megan Thee Stallion faces down Tory Lanez at shooting trial

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Megan Thee Stallion took the stand in a Los Angeles courtroom Tuesday and told jurors that rapper Tory Lanez fired five shots at her feet, yelled at her to dance and wounded her as she tried to walk away from him in the Hollywood Hills more than two years ago.

Stallion

"I'm in shock. I'm scared," the Grammy-winning hip-hop superstar testified Tuesday, according to The Los Angeles Times. "I hear the gun going off, and I can't believe he's shooting at me."

Her testimony came on the second day of the trial of the Canadian rapper Lanez, 30, who has pleaded not guilty to discharging a firearm with gross negligence, assault with a semiautomatic firearm and carrying a loaded, unregistered firearm in a vehicle.

With supporters gathered both outside the courthouse and in the courtroom hallway, Megan walked into the courtroom wearing a purple suit with heavy security late Tuesday morning.

"I just don't feel good," Megan, 27, said at the beginning of questioning from Deputy District Attorney Kathy Ta. "I can't believe I have to come in here and do this."

She said that on July 12, 2020, she left a party at the Hollywood Hills home of Kylie Jenner in an SUV with Lanez, his bodyguard and her friend Kelsey Harris.

Megan said she and Lanez had become close, bonding over the loss of their mothers, and had an occasionally sexual relationship. Her friend Harris, who had a "crush" on Lanez, tried to stir up trouble between the women by telling Megan she needed to stop lying to her friend.

The argument spiraled out of control, and became even more heated when she and Lanez started trashing each other's music and careers, Megan said.

"I feel like that really rubbed him the wrong way," she said. "He kept yelling and cursing."

She was wearing a bikini, but got out of the vehicle and tried to walk away when Lanez leaned out and opened fire, she said, leaving the back of her feet wounded. At one point, he yelled "Dance, b——-!" she testified.

"I looked down at my feet, and I see all the blood," she said. "Now everybody's screaming. He looked shocked. Kelsey looked shocked."

Lanez' attorney George Mgdesyan said in his opening statement that her injury showed she could not have gotten a clear look at the shooter behind her, and that he would present more evidence that countered her story during the trial.

Lanez, sitting at the defense table in a tan suit and turtleneck, took notes as she spoke.

He arrived at court holding his young son's hand. He carried the boy out of the courthouse at lunch break and at the end of the day.

"This is my support system and I'm his too," he told reporters.

Lanez, whose legal name is Daystar Peterson, could get more than 22 years in prison if convicted on all counts. He could also be deported to his native Canada.

Lanez has had a successful run of mixtapes and major-label records since his career began in 2009, with his last two albums reaching the top 10 on Billboard's charts.

Megan Thee Stallion, whose legal name is Megan Pete, was already a major up-and-coming star at the time of the incident, and her career has skyrocketed since. She won a Grammy for best new artist in 2021, and had No. 1 singles on the Billboard Hot 100 with her own song "Savage" featuring Beyoncé and as a guest on Cardi B's "WAP."

Couple provides stable home for desperate grandchildren

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have always had a big hand in helping our daughter "Lauren" raise her three kids, ages 5, 10 and 15. She has moved in with us and out many times. About a year ago, she decided she would not do it again. Instead, she moved in with a boyfriend.

The kids tried it there but told us, "We don't want to live there." They don't feel safe because there are so many strangers and so many parties there. My daughter decided to let the kids live full time with us, and she now visits us only when it's convenient for her. If we ask her to come stay with them, she will agree but not show up. She also promises the world to her kids and doesn't follow through. She always has a ridiculous excuse as to why.

The 15-year-old has lived here more often than not. Lauren says I make it too comfortable for them here, and I should tell them they can't live here. She has tried to force them to leave, but both of the older ones flat-out refuse. The oldest said if they can't live here, they will go to a foster home because "We are not living with our mom, ever!"

Lauren does have full custody. She drops off the youngest after spending a couple of hours with her, promising she'll be back "in a little bit," but we may not see her for three to five days. Are we wrong for giving them a good, safe home? Should we tell them they have to go live with their mother?

BACK AND FORTH IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR BACK AND FORTH: Of course you are not wrong! Your grandchildren are lucky to have such stable and loving grandparents in their lives. I see no reason why you should tell those kids they aren't welcome in your home, which is their refuge. Your daughter has proven repeatedly that she isn't able to take care of her children.

Consider discussing with a family law attorney how to gain legal custody of all of them. If the older kids tell a judge about the conditions at their mother's house and that they feel unsafe there, custody may be granted.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: For six months I was in a relationship with a meth addict who cheated on me constantly. The woman he left me for has accused him of cheating with ME. Am I wrong to want nothing to do with him? I know it would only end in heartache, or another physical fight where the police will be called again.

He's hit me before, which is why I have blocked him on everything. I don't want to speak to him even if I see him in person. I'm better off, but he won't stop. He tries every couple of months. Help, please.

ADDICT'S EX IN TENNESSEE

DEAR EX: Continue to ignore and avoid this addict. If he shows up, remind him that he's out of your life, you want to keep it that way, and if he doesn't stop stalking you, you will file a police report. In light of his violent past, a court order might be the next logical step.

■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

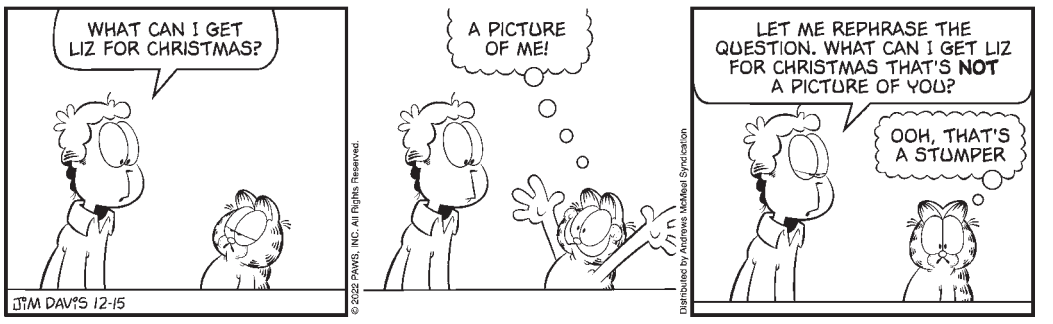
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

I'M HAVING A LOT OF HOLIDAY STRESS.
WHY? YOU DON'T SHOP FOR ANYONE, YOU'VE GOT TWO WEEKS OFF FROM SCHOOL, AND YOUR PARENTS DO ALL THE COOKING, CLEANING, AND DECORATING! HOW COULD YOU HAVE HOLIDAY STRESS?
DEEP DOWN, I DOUBT MY GREED FOR PRESENTS CAN OVERCOME MY DESIRE TO MISBEHAVE.
© 1992 Watterson/Distributed by Andrews McMeel Syndication
12-15

Garfield®

By Jim Davis


WHAT CAN I GET LIZ FOR CHRISTMAS?
A PICTURE OF ME!
LET ME REPHRASE THE QUESTION. WHAT CAN I GET LIZ FOR CHRISTMAS THAT'S NOT A PICTURE OF YOU?
OOH, THAT'S A STUMPER
JIM DAVIS 12-15
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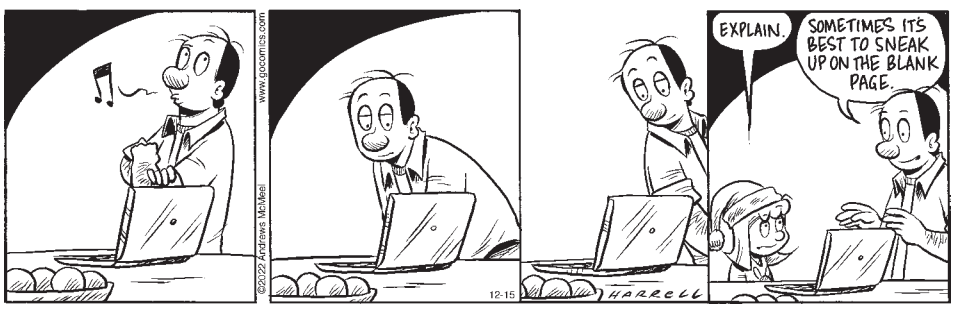
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

HEY, BUB! YOUR DOG JUST DUMPED IN MY YARD!
SORRY. I DON'T HAVE A BAG.
HANG ON. YOU CAN BORROW MY SCOOPER. I'LL GO GET IT.
OK. I'LL WAIT HERE FOR YOU.
OH MY GOSH! THIS IS JUST LIKE ONE OF THOSE HALLMARK CHRISTMAS MOVIES!!!
12-15

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Mighty trees
5 Gridiron scores, for short
8 Dance move
12 Ancient letter
13 "Alley —"
14 Sped
15 At the summit of
16 Teeny
17 Victor's cry
18 Skin soother
20 Film festival city
22 Rainbow
23 Dol. fractions
24 Snapshots
27 Waylaid
32 — Mae (Whoopi's role in "Ghost")
33 Aussie hopper
34 Neither Rep. nor Dem.
35 Starbucks order
38 Makes a choice
39 Have breakfast
40 Gingerbread —
42 In disarray
45 Polynesian island
49 New Mexico resort
50 Id counterpart
52 Scent
53 Life — know it
54 Dazzle
55 Spartan queen
56 Poker holding
57 Junior
58 June honorees

DOWN

1 Spoken
2 Car
3 Shoelace snarl
4 Old photo tints
5 Limo alternatives
6 Female rabbit
7 Detail, in short
8 Brief jobs
9 County subdivision
10 Pennsylvania port
11 Corrals
19 Choice word?
21 Prefix with puncture
24 "The Raven" writer
25 Check-cashing needs
26 South African city
28 Aug. and Sept.
29 Place of prosperity
30 Tolkien creature
31 Driller's deg.
36 Elevated
37 Timetable abbr.
38 In phone limbo
41 Battery size
42 Hexagonal state
43 "Apollo 13" org.
44 Evergreens
46 Notion
47 Lincoln in-law
48 Nest egg choices
51 Stickum

Solution time: 24 mins.

B	I	R	D	■	P	A	W	■	R	C	A	S
O	M	A	R	■	I	D	O	■	S	H	U	T
C	O	P	Y	D	E	S	K	■	V	I	T	A
A	N	T	I	C	■	■	E	M	P	L	O	Y
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S	R	O	■	R	E	S	E	T	■	O	L	E
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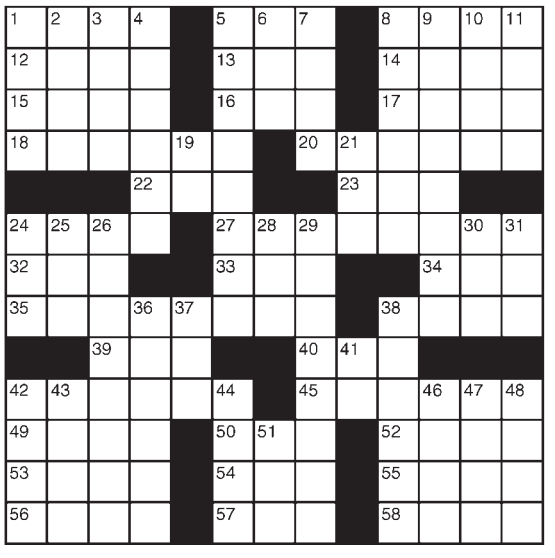
Yesterday's answer 12-15



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Maude Apatow, 25; Adam Brody, 43; Julie Taymor, 70; Don Johnson, 73.

Happy Birthday: Reassess your goals and adjust them to fit your current lifestyle and dreams. Channel your energy into something that matters to you. Be the one to make a difference and set an example. Keep your emotions out of the mix when dealing with loved ones and people who don't share your beliefs. Focus on truth, justice and responsibilities. Your numbers are 6, 17, 20, 29, 35, 46, 49.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Focus on learning, understanding and adjusting to change. Don't balk at orders; take responsibility and contribute what you can. Recognize when one thing ends and something new begins, and forge into the future with optimism. Live in the moment. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Take a unique approach to life. Don't share secrets or overspend. You can't buy love, so keep your money in your pocket and look for simple items that are useful and appreciated. Shop smart and offer each gift with love. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Don't jeopardize your reputation or position. Take care of business and go above and beyond to ensure you get the desired results. Refuse to let your emotions interfere with your responsibilities. Step up and do your part. ✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Live for the people, places and pastimes that make you happy. Make time for yourself and your loved ones. Confess your true feelings and make plans that bring you closer to your personal goal. Present innovative ideas at work. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* You can have fun without going overboard. Refrain from overindulgence, and focus on helping others and taking care of responsibilities. Nurture important relationships and share your intentions with someone close to you. A commitment looks promising. Follow through with your plans. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Slow down, gain strength and figure out how best to move forward. Get out and mingle with experienced people who can offer insight into the possibilities. Add to your qualifications and head in a direction that excites you. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Be careful not to raise sensitive issues that disrupt your personal life. Go directly to the source, find the truth and make decisions based on what you discover. Show more discipline regarding fitness, eating habits and a healthy lifestyle. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Plan your actions and follow through. A practical approach will win out in the end. Make plans to do something that soothes your soul and sparks your imagination. Surround yourself with creative, aware individuals who have something to contribute. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Be realistic and promise only what you know you can deliver. Don't oversell your qualifications; it's best to surprise everyone with your expertise. A change at work may upset you; bide your time, and the tables will turn in your favor. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Embrace the future with open arms. Review the past and make changes to ensure the upcoming year will be better than this one. Look for innovative ways to use your skills and expertise. Financial gain looks promising, but remember: easy come, easy go. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Shake off any negativity brewing and prepare for the festivities. Aim to have the work you do bring joy to others, and it will cheer you up as well. Don't let the little things others do or say upset you. Get along and avoid disputes. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Get out and see what's happening in your neighborhood. Look at the lights and join in festivities that will give you hope for a brighter future. Keep your conversations friendly, regardless of your difference of opinion. Avoid emotional mayhem. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are hardworking, adaptable and innovative. You are detailed and precise.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

4					2			6
		3						
		8	5	7		2	3	
5						7		
		7		3		5		
		1						4
	2	4		8	7	9		
						8		
1			9					2

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/15

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

8	2	6	1	3	9	4	5	7
4	5	1	2	7	6	3	9	8
3	7	9	4	8	5	2	1	6
6	9	4	3	5	8	1	7	2
1	3	7	9	6	2	5	8	4
5	8	2	7	1	4	6	3	9
7	4	5	8	2	1	9	6	3
2	6	8	5	9	3	7	4	1
9	1	3	6	4	7	8	2	5

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

ROCOCO ARCHITECTURE **Solution: 8 letters**

L	E	T	S	A	P	I	N	K	O	E	L	A	P	C
E	S	S	N	W	N	I	A	L	E	C	R	O	P	H
A	A	K	E	C	N	A	R	F	R	O	C	K	S	A
V	L	Y	D	E	L	I	C	A	T	E	I	U	L	I
E	O	S	R	E	W	O	L	F	L	U	I	D	T	R
S	N	I	A	T	N	U	O	F	C	U	R	V	E	S
C	L	G	G	D	L	N	P	I	E	U	T	A	T	S
R	E	E	I	M	L	A	R	W	O	L	L	E	Y	T
O	R	I	G	S	I	T	R	E	A	R	T	U	R	A
L	U	F	I	N	E	R	L	D	T	L	E	L	O	I
L	T	R	T	M	A	D	R	A	E	T	L	B	T	R
S	A	I	M	U	S	I	C	O	R	H	A	S	S	C
P	N	Y	R	E	L	T	U	C	R	I	T	P	I	A
G	S	E	A	S	H	E	L	L	S	E	P	A	H	S
A	E	S	T	H	E	T	I	C	T	F	O	S	C	E

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Aesthetic, Angels, Art, Asymmetric, Blue, Cathedral, Chairs, Curves, Cutlery, Delicate, Design, Flowers, Fluid, Fountain, France, Garden, History, Leaves, Mirror, Music, Nature, Painting, Pale, Paris, Pastel, Pattern, Pink, Porcelain, Rocks, Salon, Scrolls, Seashells, Shapes, Sky, Soft, Spiral, Staircase, Statue, Stucco, Walls, Yellow

Yesterday's Answer: Security

The NEW **Treasury 50** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Celtics blow big lead, rally back, beat Lakers 122-118 in OT

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Jayson Tatum scored 44 points, Jaylen Brown added five of his 25 in overtime, and the Boston Celtics blew a 20-point lead in the second half before rallying from a late 13-point deficit for a thrilling 122-118 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday night.

Marcus Smart hit four 3-pointers and scored 18 points for the NBA-leading Celtics, who wrapped up their six-game trip by avoiding their first three-game losing streak of the season.

Anthony Davis had 37 points and 12 rebounds, but he also missed two free throws with 28 seconds left in regulation to allow the Celtics back into it. LeBron James scored 33 points in a memorable chapter of the famed rivalry between the 17-time champion teams dubbed "the two pillars of our league" by new Lakers coach Darvin Ham.

The rivals played a wild second half in which the Lakers rallied from an 81-61 deficit midway through the third quarter with a 45-12 surge. Boston then erased Los Angeles' 106-93 lead in the final 3:40 with a 17-4 run capped by Tatum's tying jumper with 17.8 seconds left.

Russell Westbrook had 20 points and 14 assists for Los Angeles, but he also missed three open jumpers in overtime while the Celtics pulled away with 12 consecutive points. In their first game back from a six-game trip, the Lakers lost for the fourth time in five games after an 8-2 stretch that breathed life into their slow-starting season.

James scored 22 points after halftime for Los Angeles, but Smart hit his fourth 3-pointer with 45.8 seconds left to trim the Lakers' lead to 110-108.

Davis then bricked two free throws, echoing his miss on a potential winning free throw with 3.7 seconds left in regulation of what became an overtime loss for the Lakers at Philadelphia last Friday.

Tatum coolly tied it with his 14-footer near the baseline, and James missed a 3-pointer at the regulation buzzer.

AP

Boston Celtics' Jayson Tatum (0) and Marcus Smart (36) high-five during first half of an NBA basketball game against the Los Angeles Lakers Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022, in Los Angeles.

Bucks 128, Warriors 111

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 30 points while Bobby Portis finished with 25 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Milwaukee past Golden State in a matchup of the NBA's last two champions.

Stephen Curry scored 20 points despite missing seven of 10 3-point attempts. Jordan Poole added 18 points and Klay Thompson 14 for Golden State.

The Warriors dropped their third straight road game and fell to 2-12 away from home this season. The defending NBA champions have allowed at least 114 points in every road game.

The Warriors trailed 64-52 at the break and the Bucks created some separation with an 8-2 run to open the second half. Golden State coach Steve Kerr cleared his bench early in the fourth quarter.

76ers 123, Kings 103

In Philadelphia, Joel Embiid scored 31 points, James Harden had 21 points and 15 assists, and Philadelphia scored 80 points in the first half and cruised past Sacramento.

Tobias Harris also scored 21 points for the Sixers, who have won three straight to start a seven-game homestand.

Domantas Sabonis led the Kings with 22 points. Sacramento has lost three of the first four games of its six-game East Coast swing.

Philadelphia led 80-55 at halftime.

Rockets 111, Suns 97

In Houston, Jalen Green had 26 points and Kevin Porter Jr. added 18 Houston never trailed against slumping Phoenix.

The Rockets led by as many as 23 and held a comfortable lead for most of the night in the return of coach Stephen Silas, who was back after missing the previous game following the death of his father, longtime NBA player and coach Paul Silas.

The Suns dropped their fifth straight. Phoenix was playing without Devin Booker, and Deandre Ayton (left ankle) and Cameron Payne (right foot) were hurt in the first half.

Mikal Bridges led the Suns with 18 points but shot a horrific 4 of 24 from the field and 2 of 10 from 3-point range.

Jazz 121, Pelicans 100

In Salt Lake City, Malik Beasley made five 3-pointers and scored 21 points, and Utah cooled off Zion Williamson and New Orleans.

Williamson scored 26 points in 26 minutes and Jonas Valanciunas scored 15, but the Pelicans' seven-game winning streak was snapped. Only one of those wins came on the road.

After missing three games with an illness, Utah's Lauri Markkanen showed little rust in scoring 19 points, and Nickeil Alexander-Walker also scored 19 and had a season-high six assists for the Jazz.

Walker Kessler had 11 points, a career-high 16 rebounds and three blocked shots. Jarred Vanderbilt had season bests of 18 points and 14 rebounds.

Williamson played just 11 minutes in the first half because of foul trouble. The Pelicans never recovered the lead they lost when he left the game.

The Jordan Trophy: NBA rebrands, redesigns its MVP award

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

Michael Jordan was moments away from hoisting his third of what would become five NBA Most Valuable Player awards, and then-Commissioner David Stern greeted him at the midcourt ceremony with words that were both simple and profound.

"You are simply the standard," Stern said that night in 1992, "by which basketball excellence is measured."

That's never been more true.

The NBA MVP award has been renamed The Michael Jordan Trophy, the league announced Tuesday. Jordan is a five-time MVP so he has five trophies named for Maurice Podoloff — the league's first commissioner. But after six decades of the award bearing Podoloff's name, the NBA decided the time was right to rebrand.

The Jordan trophy will stand 23.6 inches tall and weigh 23.6 pounds—nods to his jersey number and six NBA titles with the Chicago Bulls—but is not a depiction of him. The chairman of the Charlotte Hornets approved the design, one that symbolizes someone reaching for excellence, but did not want the statue to be of himself. He also declined a request for comment through the NBA.

"Anybody should be able to see this and see themselves in it," said Mark Smith, a longtime designer at Jordan Brand and the person who oversaw the trophy's design. "They should feel the excellence of Michael Jordan and his pursuit. It's got his name on it, but it isn't him. It's everybody. It could be a shipbuilder or it could be a teacher or a lawyer or a writer who looks at it and says, 'That's what I'm trying to do.'"

The league has rebranded almost all its trophies in the last two seasons, even adding some new ones. As part of Tuesday's announcement, the league revealed that The Jerry West Award is being introduced and will be given to the NBA Clutch Player of the Year — which, like almost all other league awards, will be voted on by a media panel. NBA coaches will nominate players for the clutch award.

Also, the Defensive Player of the Year will now receive The Hakeem Olajuwon Trophy; the Rookie of the Year will receive The Wilt Chamberlain Trophy; the Sixth Man of the Year will now receive The John Havlicek Trophy; and the NBA's Most Improved Player will receive The George Mikan Trophy.

"Our new collection of trophies celebrates some of the greatest and most impactful players in the history of the NBA," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said. "As we recognize the league's top performers each season, we also pay tribute to the legends who embody these prestigious awards."

It became evident last week that something was changing about the MVP trophy when the NBA said Podoloff's name was going onto a new prize—a trophy that will go to the team with the best regular season record.

The MVP trophy has many levels of numerical significance related to Jordan, besides its height and weight. It has a five-sided base, a tribute to his five MVP awards. The name badge is six-sided, one for each of his championships. The base is shaped at a 15-degree angle; he played 15 NBA seasons.

"I'm always going to numbers and symbiology as key root DNA to make something specific and authentic for that person," Smith said. "When you start putting all these things together, there's only one person and it becomes very unique. Not different, but very unique."

Jordan was involved at every step of the design process, Smith said. The final product was a bronze trophy depicting a player "breaking out of a rock to reach for the ultimate rock — a crystal basketball," the league said. The trophy becomes more refined closer to the top, meant to show how hard work leads to something more polished and finally something great.

Smith said he fully expects to be emotional when he sees the new trophy awarded for the first time this spring.

"This is actually the highest achievement for a single player ... and it's mind-blowing," Smith said. "It'll be a mind-blower."

Other trophies renamed or reimagined in the last year or so include ones named for Joe Dumars (sportsmanship), Red Auerbach (coach of the year), the Kobe Bryant All-Star MVP award — along with the Larry O'Brien Trophy for the NBA champions and the Bill Russell NBA Finals MVP trophy.

New Eastern Conference and Western Conference championship trophies named for Bob Cousy and Oscar Robertson respectively were added, along with the Larry Bird Trophy for East finals MVP and the Magic Johnson Trophy for West finals MVP. The league also began issuing divisional championship trophies, naming them for Nat "Sweetwater" Clifton (Atlantic Division), Wayne Embry (Central), Earl Lloyd (Southeast), Willis Reed (Southwest), Sam Jones (Northwest) and Chuck Cooper (Pacific).

San Jose finally wins in women's caging

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

2022 MARIANAS VILLAGE CUP

San Jose finally saw the light at the end of the tunnel after beating San Antonio, 43-33, in the women's division of the 2022 Marianas Village Pride Basketball League last Saturday at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

It was the first win in six games for San Jose, who rode the hot hands of national player Irish Pagarao in the 10-point victory.

Pagarao fired 9 points in the first half as San Jose built a 20-14 lead. She would only build on that momentum in the second half, firing another 16 points to lead her team to the coveted win.

Mary Kay Alferos backed up Pagarao's 25 points with 10 points of her own, while San Antonio, which lost its third game in four outings, was paced by the 20 markers of Aaleyah Fatialofa.

Earlier, Abraham Saralu sank the marginal basket as Finasisu upset erstwhile undefeated Kagman, 51-49, in the boys 13 division.

MARK RABAGO

San Antonio, seen here in action against Garapan, lost to San Jose in the women's division of the 2022 Marianas Village Pride Basketball League last Saturday at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

Jarius Pangelinan led Finasisu with 20 points in Finasisu's second win in five games, while the now 5-1 Kagman had Liam Wilson's 14 points leading them.

In the boys 18, Navy Hill kept San Vicente winless with an 88-19 overkill. The win allowed the former to even its record to 2-2, while the latter dropped to 0-4. Nyrel Eugenio led Navy Hill with 15 points, while Jerald Aquino's 7 led San Vicente.

On Sunday, Tanapag improved to 5-2 after repulsing a late rally by Oleai, 34-30, in the boys 13.

Derek Tenorio and Louis Rectitud shared team-high honors for the victors with 8 points apiece, while the 10 markers of Daniel Joab led the now 3-3 Oleai squad.

In the women's division, Dandan kept San Antonio winless in the weekend after defeating them, 31-25. Now carrying a 3-1 card, Dandan was led by the 11 points of Kina Rangamar, while the 14 of towering Azriel Fatialofa paced San Antonio, which dropped to 1-4.

Aiden Suba, meanwhile, scored 23 points—including the marginal two free throws—to lift Dandan to a 64-63 win over Chalan Kiya.

It was the first win in three tries for Dandan, while Chalan Kiya dropped its third game in four outings. Lushawnn Reyes spearheaded Chalan Kiya's sorry loss with 20 points.

San Jose 43 – Pagarao 25, Alferos 10, Breakenridge 4, Ferrer 2, Pena 2.

San Antonio 33 – Aa. Fatialofa 20, Backe 4, Ai. Fatialofa 4, Navarro 3, Enriquez 2.

Scoring by halves: 20-14, 43-33.

DOLPHINS

From Page 24

Since the beginning of the season, he said that the team wanted to win the championship this year and "being able to accomplish this goal was fulfilling."

As for winning the Golden Boot and the MVP award, the U20 National Team soccer player said, "It was nice winning the Golden Boot for the season. I would like to thank my teammates and coach Don [Cabrera] for giving me this opportunity to perform [at] this level. It wasn't my goal to win the Golden Boot, but [after] noticing my performance each game, I knew I had the potential of winning this award."

Third place went to Saipan International School after defeating Mount Carmel School, 2-0, in the bronze medal game before the finals.

Ian Song scored the first goal in the 29th minute and the second goal was made by Casey Chambers in the 43rd minute.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Brian Lubao, second left, of the Marianas High School varsity soccer team received the Golden Boot and Most Valuable Player award after scoring the winning goal in the championship game of the NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League last Tuesday at the Northern Mariana Islands Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

MESSI

From Page 24

bing his hamstring.

Maybe it was a ruse. Messi was soon toying with his opponents in a way only he can and put Argentina ahead by lifting his penalty into the top corner after Álvarez was taken out by Dominik Livakovic after clipping the ball past the Croatia goalkeeper.

Álvarez scored himself in the 39th after a surging run from halfway, which started after he collected Messi's short pass. Then came the crowning moment, Álvarez's second goal, after Messi took Gvardiol for a ride in the right corner.

It was one game too far for Croatia, which had beaten Japan and Brazil on penalties in the knockout stage, and star midfielder Luka Modric, who—at 37—has likely played his final World Cup match.

Summing up a frustrating game for the little midfield magician, he was substituted in the 81st minute and had a bright red nose after the ball slammed into his face moments earlier.

"The first goal took the match in a different direction," Croatia coach Zlatko Dalić said. "It's the true Messi we all expected to see."

Argentina maintained its record of never having lost in the World Cup semifinals and has reached the final for the sixth time.

Those dark days after losing to Saudi Arabia in its opening group match seem so long ago now for Argentina, which will be hard to stop in the final with Messi playing this well.

"Even though we lost our first match, we were confident that this group was going to push forward," Messi said. "We know what we are, and we called on the fans to believe in us."

MESSI RECORDS

Messi became Argentina's record scorer at World Cups with his third penalty of the tournament taking him to 11 goals in total — one more than Gabriel Batistuta. He also tied the record for most appearances at the World Cup by playing for the 25th time, the same number as Lothar Matthäus of Germany.

ALVAREZ

The 22-year-old Álvarez didn't start the tournament as Argentina's striker. He only took the place of Lautaro Martinez in the third group game and now has four goals, one behind Messi and Mbappé. He is the youngest player to score twice in a World Cup semifinal match since a 17-year-old Pele scored a hat trick in 1958.

JALEN

From Page 24

aim for a faster time as well."

Asked what was the most challenging part of this year's Honolulu Marathon, Lucido said it was definitely the strong headwinds he encountered throughout the 42-kilometer race.

"The toughest part of it was the headwind climbing up Diamond Head and the long strip going to Hawaii Kai from Kahala Area. The elevation gain going up Diamond Head is already challenging and if you add strong headwind with it, that's a combination you wish you never had to go through, plus that was around Mile 8."

Lucido added there's already a long unforgiving strip in Kahala Area going to Hawaii Kai that you have to get through and that part is already mentally challenging and the headwind just adds to it.

"Another tough part I would say is miles 22 and 23. Last year, my legs would start cramping around those miles and it happened the same this year. But I still pulled through nonetheless despite these challenges."

Overall though, Lucido said his second Honolulu Marathon was easier than his first because he ran it with a friend.

"I definitely would say it was easier than last year's one because I had someone to run with. Her name is Clarisse Cayabyab. She is the one that told me that she would love to try out the marathon too. It was her second time but first in-person marathon as she did her first one virtually in Guam. She told me her first one did not go so well because it was virtual, there was no crowd, and she did it alone. I told her about my experience last year. Despite not having anyone to run with I still had a fun time doing it because there were many people cheering you on from the side and there were other runners as well. It gets the adrenaline pumping and there is just so much happening around you. She was so stoked about it and that confirmed her decision. Plus, I am familiar with the route now and know where to conserve or push the pace, so I had the course in the back of my head."

On becoming a two-time Honolulu Marathon finisher, Lucido said the experience was again nothing short of amazing.

"There were so many more people that joined this year because it was the 50th anniversary so it was special. I got to see people from other countries around the world. The music they played to get people pumped up for it and they also had someone sing the national anthem, both the United States and Hawaii one. To top it all off, the fireworks display they had running for a good 10-15 minutes was the highlight of it all."

It also helped that Lucido actually ran faster than his Honolulu Marathon debut last year.

"I was 5 minutes faster than last year. My official time for this year's marathon was 4 hours and 40 minutes compared to last year's 4 hours and 45 minutes. So that already tells me the training plans that my coach Edward Dela Cruz Jr., has laid out for me definitely paid off. I appreciate him greatly for that."

Lucido thanked Dela Cruz, who is president of Run Saipan, for guiding him to his goal of competing in his second Honolulu Marathon.

"I talked to my coach about joining this year's marathon and he gave me workouts for it. I told him that I was aiming for a better time and to maintain my legs for it. I would aim for about 30-34 miles a week with long runs every weekend for three weeks then a deload week. Then aim for the same distance for the next one but different speed workouts or just add more sets and reps to the original one. I would like to dedicate this marathon to God, to my family, friends, my Run Saipan family, and to my coach and brother, Edward Dela Cruz."

Dela Cruz, for his part, said he's proud of his padawan's latest conquest.

"Next year we will get him sub-4 hours. I hope he rests up because once he gets to Saipan next week he's going right into one of our island relay squads and he will compete in the 1 mile championship on Dec. 31."

Lady Dolphins secure top playoff spot in HS hoops

By LEIGH GASES
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CORRESPONDENT

The Marianas High School Lady Dolphins secured the top seed in the playoffs after defeating Agape Christian School Torchbearers in the last regular season game of the 2022 IT&E Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League last Dec. 7 at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The Lady Dolphins, led by Destiny Pangelinan, outscored the Torchbearers, 47-19, and allowed the Torchbearers only 6 points in the first half.

Pangelinan swished 18 points through the net—outdoing herself in every game this season. She was supported by teammates Kalista Klaver's 8 points and Angellyn Roligat's 7 buckets.

On the defense, the Lady Dolphins' speedy footwork and tight screens didn't allow the Torchbearers much bearing with the ball, as no player reached double digits. Eunice Xu was the lone player who was able to penetrate their defenses with 8 points.

The rest of the Torchbearers had a tough time navigating through Dolphin-infested waters as Ruth Zhang managed to score 6 points, with a field goal each from Lynn Zhao and Pheobe Chen, and a free throw from Susie Cheng.

The Lady Dolphins ended the regular season on top of the leaderboard with 5-1 win-loss card, while ACS has a 3-4 record.

Burning rubber through the night, Saipan Southern High School handed Grace Christian Academy their second loss of the season after defeating them, 37-22.

In a close first half with just a 1-point deficit of 13-12 in favor of the Lady Eagles, Lady Manta Tasilyn Ramon went into overdrive with her 16 points and steered them to W city in the second half with not a single glance in the rearview mirror.

Following the lead of Ramos, the Lady Mantas' Yasmeen Younis and Andrea Ramos took turns with nine and six points respectively from the perimeter, assisting their team to a huge lead in the final minutes of the game.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marianas High School's Destiny Pangelinan goes for a shot against Mount Carmel School during one of their games in the 2022 IT&E Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Meanwhile, the Lady Eagles had their foot on the brake as they couldn't get a proper handle on the ball, with top scorer Azriel Fatialofa reduced to just 7 points. Teammates Soleil Lamar contributed 7 points as well along with Katriel Saures' 6 points, and Alayna Howards' 2 points—but there just wasn't enough gas in their tank to drive past the Lady Mantas for the win.

The Lady Mantas and Lady Eagles are tied for the second seed at 4-2 in the standings.

The championship game is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 17.

In the first game, Kagman High School defeated Mount Carmel School, 35-22, with Kiana Camacho leading the Lady Ayuyus with her 14 points.

KHS' Elicia Cabrera backstopped Camacho with 11 points, while Sheira Dela Rosa scored 5, Priscilla Tomokane made 4, and one free throw was made by Kaitani Tudela.

Valerie Estella scored the most for the Lady Knights with 10 points followed by Kayannie Peter's 5 points. Gwen Gamab sank 3 points, while Chealza Navarro and Erin Frink scored 2 points each.

The Lady Ayuyus wound up at 2-4, while the Lady Knights are at 3-3.

The double-elimination tournament will start tonight with Tinian High School facing off with MCS, GCA challenging ACS, and SSHS going up against KagHS.

The IT&E Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League is being run by the Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation.

MHS 47 – Pangelinan 18, Klaver 8, Roligat 7, Lopez 6, Hofschneider 4, Ogumoro and Mendoza 2.

ACS 19 – Xu 8, Zhang 6, Zhao and Chen 2, Cheng 1.

Scoring by halves: 39-6; 47-19.

SSHS 37 – Ramon 16, Younis 9, Ramos 6, Sablan 4, Sagarino 2.

GCA 22 – Fatialofa 7, Lamar 7, Soleil 6, Howards 2.

Scoring by halves: 12-13; 37-22.

KHS 35 – Camacho 14, Cabrera 11, Dela Rosa 5, Tomokane 4, Tudela 1.

MCS 22 – Estella 10, Peter 5, Gamab 3, Navarro and Frink 2.

Scoring by halves: 16-9; 35-22.

Track facility closed to public Friday, Saturday

PACIFIC MINI GAMES PHOTO

The NMI's Denise Myers, right, competes against a Solomon Islands athlete in the steeplechase event during the 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games held in June at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field facility. This weekend, the OSC track will host the NMA Open Track Meet.

The Northern Marianas Sports Association has announced that the Oleai Sports Complex's track and field facility will be closed to the public this Friday and Saturday to give way to an athletics competition.

This Friday, Dec. 16, the track will be closed from 4pm onwards, while on Saturday, Dec. 17, the facility is off limits to the public from 5am until the Northern Marianas Athletics completes its events for the NMA Open Track Meet.

The NMA will have the long jump, shot put and 200m, 1,600m, and 4x100m relay runs for this Friday's competition, while Saturday's events lined up include the 5K, 100m, 400m, and 4x400m relay races and the discus and javelin throws.

Regular operating hours at the track and field facility will resume on Sunday, Dec. 18. ***(PR)***

Antonio strikes gold in Tour of Guam

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

"Mighty Man'Amko" Florence Antonio made sure the CNMI won't go home empty-handed when he won the men's 60-69 division short course of the 2022 Tour of Guam last Sunday.

The 64-year-old board member of the Triathlon Association of the CNMI completed the 42-kilometer course in 1:49:41.9, good enough for gold in the five-cyclist division

"I am turning 64 in four months. I dedicate my win to all my friends and family and to the CNMI."

The Zambales, Philippines native said there's really no secret in keeping his active lifestyle.

"The secrets are regular exercises, proper diet, rest, relaxation, and peace of mind," he said.

Antonio shared that his strategy coming into the Tour of Guam was to do regular exercise, complete rest, and relax while racing to save energy in the end.

What's more impressive is Antonio continues to compete even after surviving stage 3 prostate cancer and grade 4 internal hemorrhoids, two surgeries to remove part of his gallbladder, inguinal hernia that resulted in five major surgeries, and a major car-bike accident in 2020.

Antonio first came to Saipan on June 13, 1982, as a heavy equipment mechanic and operator. He now considers the CNMI his home.

"I just want to encourage people to live an active lifestyle despite your health issues. It's the key to a longer and fulfilling life," he was quoted by *TAGA Plus* in a 2021 issue.

Northern Mariana Islands Cycling Federation official and Team NMI manager Jay Diyco congratulated Antonio for the latest feather in his decorated cap.

"Congratulations for winning his age group. He is a great inspiration to everyone. To the whole team congratulations as well and thank you for representing the CNMI," he said.

Aside from Antonio, also making the trip to Guam to compete in the 2022 Tour of Guam were Rusty Valino, Jojo Valencia, Nelson Pagaduan, and Diyco himself.

Gabe Cubacub was the overall winner of the short course after pedaling to the finish line in 1:27:05.5. Yoon Heon, meanwhile, beat 141 other cyclists in topping the 105-kilometer long course in 2:56:17.4.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Florence Antonio, right, negotiates the 42-kilometer short course of the 2022 Tour of Guam last Sunday.

Celtics blow big lead, rally back, beat Lakers 122-118 in OT

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Lady Dolphins secure top playoff spot in HS hoops

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Dolphins win title on Lubao's goal

By LEIGH GASES
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CORRESPONDENT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Marianas High School varsity soccer team is the 2022-2023 NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League champions after defeating Saipan Southern High School, 1-0, in the championship game of the NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League last Tuesday at the Northern Mariana Islands Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Marianas High School senior Brian Lubao scored the winning goal in the Dolphins' 1-0 win against Saipan Southern High School in the NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League championship game last Tuesday.

Competition was tough as both the Dolphins and Manta Rays had a hard time making their way through the field in the first half at the Northern Mariana Islands Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Lubao made several attempts at the goal, with one attempt not counted due to it being scored offside—as he was past the last Manta Ray defender. But finally, in the 36th minute of the second half, a goal attempt by Lubao stuck, which was the eventual winning goal for the Dolphins.

With that, Lubao was awarded the Golden Boot for scoring 18 goals which was the most goals of the season and is also the championship game's most valuable player.

Along with Lubao, Mark Costales, Anthony Bergancia, Dylan Mister, Chanyang Woo, Jerald Aquino, Leland Deleon Guerrero, Andrew Sablan, Daniell Mar Pablo, and Cody Shimizu make up the championship team.

The graduating 18-year-old told *Saipan Tribune* that "scoring the winning goal was very rewarding for me as I had many chances to score but I couldn't put the ball in the back of the net. Also, I could tell how important this goal was for [the team] because we were struggling to get a goal in the first half. Therefore, being the individual to score the winning goal feels great."

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Jalen completes Honolulu Marathon anew

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Run Saipan's Jalen Lucido completed his second Honolulu Marathon last Sunday (Monday in Hawaii) and did it in a personal best time of 4 hours and 40 minutes.

"I joined the marathon again because I wanted to put my training to the test. I have been training all year not specifically for the marathon but just to run a faster pace in any distance. I had no plans in joining any running competition earlier in the year other than the upcoming marathon so that's why I decided to join it."

The 23-year-old Marianas High School alumnus said what made his second Honolulu Marathon even better was he finally ran it with a friend.

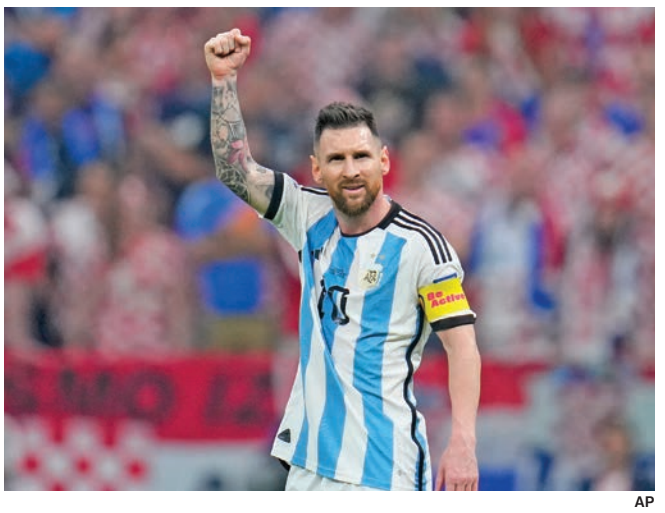
"My friend told me she wanted to join so it gave me more encouragement to do it. I wanted to see if I could

See JALEN on Page 22

CONTRIBUTED OHOTO

Run Saipan's Jalen Lucido proudly shows his finisher's medal after completing the 2022 Honolulu Marathon last Sunday (Monday in Hawaii).

Messi, Argentina beat Croatia 3-0 to reach World Cup final



AP

Argentina's Lionel Messi celebrates after scoring from the penalty spot the opening goal during the World Cup semifinal soccer match between Argentina and Croatia at the Lusail Stadium in Lusail, Qa-

By STEVE DOUGLAS
AP SPORTS WRITER

LUSAIL, Qatar (AP)—Lionel Messi bent over, clutched his left hamstring and appeared to grimace, immediately spreading panic through the soccer world but especially among all Argentines.

Was their superstar—their idol—injured? Was he going to have to come off early in the World Cup semifinals?

No such luck for Croatia.

Before long, Messi was producing perhaps the best performance of his record-tying 25 appearances at the World Cup, leading Argentina to a 3-0 victory over Croatia on Tuesday that set up a meeting with either France or Morocco in Sunday's final.

Messi is back in soccer's biggest match on his mission to win the game's greatest prize for the first time. At 35, he could hardly be playing any better.

Messi converted a penalty and played a part in the other two goals by Julián Álvarez—one with an outrageous piece of skill that brought roars of approval from Argentina's huge following—to turn an initially tense occasion into a procession.

"A lot is going through my head—it's very emotional seeing all of this," Messi said in a post-match interview on the field as he looked up at Argentina's celebrating, scarf-waving supporters. "To see the fans—'the family'—during the whole tournament was so incredible. We're going to the final, which is what we wanted."

It will be Messi's second World Cup final—Argentina lost the other one to Germany in 2014—in what might be his last appearance at the tournament.

The stage is set for a player widely regarded as one of the game's best, if not the absolute best, to go out on the ultimate high.

He is thrilling his legion of fans along the way.

His swivel and driving run to set up the third goal for Álvarez in the 69th minute left Josko Gvardiol—one of the best defenders at the World Cup—grasping at thin air and epitomized Messi's confidence and swagger.

He is embracing the responsibility of leading Argentina to its third World Cup title, scoring in five of his six games in Qatar.

He even had a penalty saved in the one game in which he didn't score.

"I am honored to train him and see him play," said Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni, who was in tears in the post-match celebrations. "Every time you see him play, it's a huge source of motivation for his teammates, fans and the whole world."

Croatia failed in its bid to reach a second straight World Cup final after conceding two goals in a five-minute span from the 34th, just when the team was looking comfortable at Lusail Stadium and Messi was raising concerns by rub-

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